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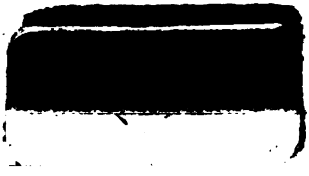

John Barnard's 1815

THE

WHOLE WORKS

OF THE

REV. W. BATES, D. D.

ARRANGED AND REVISED,

WITH A

MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR,

COPIOUS INDEX AND TABLE OF TEXTS ILLUSTRATED.

BY W. FARMER.

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CONTAINING:

I. SERMONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS.
II. DR. BATES' FUNERAL SERMON.
III. A TABLE OF SUCH SCRIPTURES AS ARE ILLUSTRATED IN THE WORK.
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CONTENTS

OF

VOL. IV.

MISCELLANEOUS SERMONS.

Page.

Sermon I. On the existence of God. 1

Heb. 11. 6. *But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*

II. III. Sin the most formidable evil. 33

Gen. 39. 9. *How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God.*

IV. How men are said to be the sons of God. 67

1 John 5. 2. *By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep his commandments.*

V. VI. How to bear afflictions. 81

Heb. 12. 5. *My son despise not thou the chastening of the Lord; nor faint when thou art rebuked of him.*

VII. VIII. IX. X. XI. The marriage feast. 101

Luke 14. 23. *The Lord said to the servant, compel them to come in, that my house may be full.*

FUNERAL SERMONS.

A sermon on the death of queen mary. 176

Psalm 102. 26, 27. *They shall perish, but thou shalt endure; yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end.*

Page.

The address of condolence to his majesty, by the dissenting ministers, 199

A SERMON PREACHED AT THE FUNERAL OF DR. THOMAS MANTON, 203

1 Thess. 4. 17. *And so shall we ever be with the Lord.*

A SERMON PREACHED AT THE FUNERAL OF DR. THOMAS JACOMB, 239

Dedication to the Countess of Exeter.

John 12. 26. *If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.*

A SERMON ON THE DEATH OF MR. RICHARD BAXTER, 297

Dedication to Sir Henry Ashurst.

Luke 23. 46. *And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.*

A SERMON ON THE DEATH OF Mr. DAVID CLARKSON, 347

The preface.

John 14. 2. *In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.*

A SERMON ON THE DEATH OF MR. BENJAMIN ASHURST, 393

Dedication to Henry Ashurst Esq.

Rev. 22. 12. *And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.*

A FUNERAL SERMON ON THE DEATH OF DR. WILLIAM BATES, BY JOHN HOWE, 423

Dedication to the Duke of Bedford.

John 11. 16. *Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellow-disciples, let us also go, that we may die with him.*

SERMONS

ON

VARIOUS SUBJECTS.

SERMON I.

GOD IS.

HEB. XI. 6.

But without faith it is impossible to please God; for he that cometh to God, must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

IN this chapter faith is represented as the principle of obedience, conveying vigour and strength to other graces, whereby they become operative unto several ends and objects; hence those acts which immediately spring from other graces as their proper stock, are attributed to faith, that being the principle of their heavenly working. In this respect, as the success of an army redounds to the general's honour, so the victory which is effected by other christian qualities, is here ascribed to faith, which animates them, and leads them forth as their chief

captain; this is intimated in the text, in which we may observe.

1. A proposition, "But without faith it is impossible to please God;" that grace being the medium of our communion with God, as it gives through Christ an admission and approach to him; and in this respect is opposed to drawing back. Heb. 10. 38.

2. The argument to confirm it, "for he that comes to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him:" that is, our addresses to God, are grounded upon a firm assent to God's being and bounty. *

(1.) An assent to his being is absolutely necessary, otherwise acts of worship are as a ball struck into the open air, which returns not to us; without the entire assurance of a determinate object, religion will fail and vanish, this belief is general and speculative.

(2.) An assent to his bounty, that he will bless those "who diligently seek him;" this is particular and applicative, and it follows from the other; for the notion of a benefactor is included in that of a God; take away his rewards, you ungod him: now the steadfast acknowledgment of this, can only draw the soul to perform ingenuous and acceptable service: for the naked contemplation of those amiable excellencies which are in the Deity, can never conquer our natural fear, nor quench our enmity against him; the reflection upon his righteousness and our guilt, fills us with terror, and causes a dreadful flight from him; but the hope of his remunerating goodness, is a motive agreeable, and congruous to the breast of a man, and sweetly leads him to God; religion is the submission of ourselves to God, with an expectation of reward.

I shall treat of the first branch of the argument; "he that comes to God, must believe that he is." The firm belief of God's being, is the foundation of all religious worship; in the discussing of which, my design is to evince that supreme truth,

* This is the heathens creed,

της περὶ τȣς θεȣ̓ς ἐυσεβείας ἴθι ὅτι τὸ κυριότατον ἐκεῖνο ἐστιν. Ὀρθὰς ὑποληψεις περὶ αὐτῶν ἔχειν ὡς ὄντων, καὶ διοικȣ́ντων τὰ ὅλακαλῶς καὶ δικαίως. *Epictetus.*

"that God is." The evidence of this will appear to the light of reason, and faith, by an appeal to nature, and scriptures; I shall produce three arguments from nature, which may convince an infidel there is a God. The first is drawn from the visible world. The second from natural conscience. The third from the consent of nations.

The first argument is drawn from the visible world. In the creation, his essence and attributes are clearly revealed, his absolute power, unerring wisdom, and infinite goodness, are discovered to every capacity; therefore the apostle urges this as the most proper argument to convince the heathens, Acts 14. 15. "That they should turn from their vanities, to the living God which made heaven and earth, and sea, and all things that are therein;" to this they must naturally assent; as shadows represent the figure of those bodies from whence they are derived; so in the world there are such traces of the divine perfections, that it is easy to infer there is a Sovereign Being which is the cause of it; all the creatures and their various excellencies, are so many beams which reflect upon this sun, or lines which direct to this centre; nay, the meanest being carries some impression of the first cause, as the image of a prince is stamped upon a penny, as well as upon greater money; the beasts will instruct, and the mute fishes teach the atheist there is a god; and though he is not discerned by the outward sight, yet the understanding will as certainly discover him, as it doth an invisible spirit in a living body; and that,

1. From the being of the world, and its parts; it is apparent to sense, and acknowledged by all, that some things are of a late beginning, but those things could not proceed from themselves, for then they should work before they were, and the same things should exist, and not exist at the same instant, and in the same respect, but this implies a contradiction; it follows then, they had their original from without; we find the experience of this in ourselves; the number of our days declares there was a time in which we had no being, and therefore we could not produce ourselves.

Now, if man which is the most perfect of visible creatures, presuppose a maker, then may we sufficiently infer a creation, where we find far less perfection; and this is true, not only of things which are visible, but of all other beings; till at last we

arrive at the Supreme cause, whose being is necessary and independent.

Besides, if we consider that from nothing he hath produced their beings, and so united those two distant extremes of being, and not being, we may infer his power to be infinite; the greatest difference imaginable between two finite beings, admits of some proportion, and measure; but between that which is, and that which is not, the distance exceeds all apprehension; so that from the mere existence of things, it is evident that there is a first cause, which is independent and infinite, and this is God.

2. We may certainly argue the being of God from the consent of parts in the world, and their perpetual confederations to support the whole. Confusion is the effect of chance, but order is the product of art and industry. When we consider in a watch, how the different wheels by their unequal motions agree in distinguishing the hours, and with that exactness, as if they were inspired by the same intelligence, we presently conclude it to be the work of an artificer; for certainly pieces of brass could never have formed and united themselves into that method; proportionably when we view the harmony of all things in the world, and how disagreeing natures conspire together for the advantage of the whole, we may collect there is a divine Spirit, which hath thus disposed all things. We will not make a curious inquiry into this; an eminent degree of knowledge in several faculties, would but imperfectly discover the proportion and measures which the eternal mind hath observed in the frame of nature; it will suffice to glance at those which are exposed to the view of all.

The sun which is the eye and soul of the world, in its situation and motion is a sign to us that there is wisdom and counsel in its Author; it is fixed in the midst of the planets, that it may dispense its light and heat for the advantage of the lower world; * if it were placed in a higher or lower orb, the jarring elements,

* Quid potest esse tam apertum, tamque perspicuum, cum cœlum suspeximus, cœlestiaq; contemplati sumus, quam aliquod esse numen præstantissimæ mentis quo hæc regantur? *Tull.* in secundo de natura deorum, &c. lib. 2. de divinatione; esse præstantem aliquam, æternamque naturam & eam suspiciendam adorandamque hominum generi, pulchritudo mundi ordoque rerum cœlestium cogit confiteri.

(which by its influence, are kept in an equal poise and proportion) would break forth into disorders; and those invisible chains and connexions which fasten the parts of nature, would presently be broken; the regularity and constancy of its motion discovers a Deity; by its course from east to west, it causes the agreeable vicissitude of day and night, and maintains the amiable war of light and darkness; this distinction of time is necessary for the pleasure and profit of the world; the sun by its rising, chases away the shades of the night, to delight us with the beauties of the creation; it is God's herald which calls us forth to the discharge of our work; Psal. 104. 22, 23. this governs our labour, and conducts our industry; this animates nature, and conveys a pleasure even to these beings which are insensible; without the day, the world would be a fatal and disconsolate grave to all creatures; a chaos without order, action, or beauty; thus by the sunbeams we may clearly see a divine providence. Besides, when it retires from us, and a curtain of darkness is drawn over the world, that proves the wisdom and goodness of God. The psalmist attributes the disposition of day and night to God, "the day is thine," and with an emphasis, "the night also is thine;" Psal. 64. 16. notwithstanding its sad appearance, yet it is very beneficial; its darkness enlightens us, its obscurity makes visible the ornaments of heaven, the stars, their aspects, their dispositions, their motions which were hid in the day; it unbends the world, and gives a short and necessary truce to its labours, it recreates the wasted spirits; it is the nurse of nature, which pours into its bosom those sweet and cooling dews which beget new life, and vigour: the divine providence is also eminent in the manner of this dispensation; for the sun finishing its course about the world in the space of 24 hours, * causes that succession of day and night, which doth most fitly temper our labour and repose; whereas if the day and night should each of them continue six entire months, this division would be very inconvenient for us. We may farther observe a wise providence in the diversity it hath used to lengthen and shorten the days and nights for the advantages of several countries; for that part of the earth which is under the line, being scorched with immoderate heat, wants a

* I speak of that part of the world which is inhabited.

continual supply of moisture; therefore the longest and coolest nights are there; but it is otherwise in the northern parts, for the beams of the sun being very feeble there, providence hath so disposed, that the days are extreme long, that so by the continuance of the heat, the fruits may come to maturity and perfection. And as the difference of day and night, so the diversity of seasons proceeds from the motion of the sun, which is a work of providence, no less admirable than the former; as the motion of the sun from east to west, makes the day and night, so from north to south, causes summer and winter; * by these the world is preserved; summer crowns the earth with flowers and fruits, and produces an abundant variety for the support of living creatures; the winter which seems to be the death of nature, robbing the earth of its heat and life, contributes also to the universal good; it prepares the earth by its cold and moisture for the returning sun; in the succession of these seasons, the divine providence is very conspicuous; for since the world cannot pass from one extreme to another, without a dangerous alteration; to prevent this inconvenience, the sun makes its approaches gradually to us, the spring is interposed between the winter and summer, that by its gentle and temperate heat, it may dispose our bodies for the excess of summer; and in the same manner the sun retires by degrees from us, that so in the autumn we may be prepared for the asperities of the winter. And to close this part of the argument, the invariable succession of times and seasons is a token of the same providence; the sun which runs ten or twelve millions of leagues every day, never fails one minute of its appointed time, nor turns an inch out of its constant course, but inviolably observes the same order; so that there is nothing more regular, equal, and constant, than the succession of day and night; to ascribe this to hazard, is the most absurd extravagance; for in the effects of chance there is neither order nor constancy; as we may see in the casting of a die, which hardly falls twice together upon the same square; it is necessary therefore to conclude, that an intelligent principle guides the revolutions of the sun, thus uniformly for the advantage of the world. Psal. 19. 1, 2, 3. "The heavens declare the glory of God, the firmament shows his handy work. Day unto

* Psal. 74. 17. Thou hast made the summer and winter.

day utters speech, and night unto night adds knowledge; there is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard;" what is that language and voice, but an universal sermon to the world of God's being and excellency.

Let us now consider that vast extent of air, which fills the space between heaven and earth; this is of so pure a nature, that in a moment it transmits the influences of heaven to the lower world, this serves as an arsenal for thunders and lightnings, whereby God summons the world to dread and reverence; this is a treasury for the clouds, which dissolving in gentle showers refresh the earth, and call forth its seeds into flourishing and fruitfulness; this fans the earth with the wings of the wind, allaying those intemperate heats which would be injurious to its inhabitants; this is the region for the birds, wherein they pass as so many self-moving engines praising the Creator, this serves for the breath and life of man; from hence we may conclude the wisdom of a God, who so governs the several regions of the air, as by them to convey blessings for the necessities of man, and to send judgments for the awakening the secure to seek after God.

Let us now descend to the sea, and see how that informs us there is a God; it is a truth evident to reason, that the proper place of waters is next to the air above the earth; for as it is of a middle nature between these two elements, being purer and lighter than the earth, but more gross and heavy than the air, so it challenges a situation between them; that as the air on all parts encompasses the sea, in like manner the sea should overspread the earth, and cover the whole surface of it; that its natural inclination is such, appears by its continual flowings; who then hath arrested its course, and stopped its violence? who hath confined it to such a place and compass, that it may not be destructive to the world? certainly no other, but the great God who first gave it being and motion; besides, that which renders the power of God more conspicuous, is that by so weak a bridle as the sand, its rage is bounded; when it threatens the shore with its insulting waves, you would fear lest it should swallow up all, but it no sooner touches the sand, but its fury is turned into froth; it retires, and by a kind of submission, respects those bounds which are fixed by the Creator. Now, that

the fiercest element should be repressed by the feeblest thing in the world, and that which breaks the rocks, be limited by the sands, is a wonder of providence; therefore the Lord alledges this as an effect only proceeding from his power, and challenges an incommunicable glory upon this account. Job 38. 8, 9, 10, 11 verses, "who shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth as if it had issued out of the womb? When I made the cloud the garment thereof, and thick darkness a swaddling band for it; and brake up for it my decreed place, and set bars and doors; and said, hitherto shalt thou come, and no farther, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed."

Besides, its extent is no less worthy of admiration; it washes the four parts of the world, and so it is the bond of the universe, by which the most distant nations are united, the medium of commerce and trade, which brings great delight and advantage to men, by it the commodities which are peculiar to several countries are made common to all; thus may we trace the evident prints of a deity in the very waters; if we change the scene, and view the earth, we may perceive clear signs of a divine providence. If we consider its position, it hangs in the midst of the air, that it may be a convenient habitation for us; or its stability, the air itself is not able to bear up a feather, yet the earth remains in it fixed and unshaken, notwithstanding the storms and tempests which continually beat upon it; from hence we must conclude an invisible, but powerful hand supports it; it is reckoned amongst the Magnalia Dei, Job 38. 4, 6, "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? Or who hath laid the corner-stone thereof?" Moreover the various disposition of its parts, the mountains, the valleys, the rivers which are as the veins which convey nourishment to this great body, all intimate there is a God. *

* I might instance in its productions; in plants, their roots whereby they draw their nourishment, the firmness of their stalk by which they are defended against the violence of winds, the expansion of their leaves by which they receive the dew of heaven; or in fruits, which are produced answerable to the difference of seasons, those which are cold and moist to allay our heat in summer, and those which are of a firmer consistency in autumn, that they may serve the delight and use of man in winter, from whence the notice of a Deity is afforded to us.

* Thus if we behold the excellent order of the parts of the world, their mutual correspondence for their several ends, the heavens give light, the air breath, the earth habitation, the sea commerce; we must break forth there is a God, and this is his work; but how few are there who read the name of God which is indelibly printed on the frame of nature? Who see the excellency of the cause in the effect? Who contemplate all things in God, and God in all things? from our first infancy we are accustomed to these objects, and the edge of our apprehensions is rebated; the commonness of things takes away our esteem; we rather admire things new than great; the effects of art, than the marvels of nature; as the continual view of a glittering object dazzles the eye, that it cannot see; so by the daily presence of these wonders, our minds are blunted, we lose the quickness and freshness of our spirits.

I shall finish this argument by reflecting upon man, who is a short abridgment of the world; † the composure of his body, the powers of his soul, convince us of a wise providence; who but a God could unite such different substances, an immaterial spirit with an earthly body? Who could distinguish so many parts, assign to them their form, situation, temperature, with an absolute fitness for those uses to which they serve? We must join with the apostle, Acts 17. 27, 28. "He is not far from every one of us;" we may find him in the activity of our hands, in the beauty of our eyes, in the vivacity of all our senses; "in him we live, move, and have our being." And to look inward, who hath endowed the soul with such distinct and admirable faculties? The understanding which exercises an empire on all things, which compounds the most disagreeing, and divides the most intimate, which by the lowest effects ascends to the highest cause; the will which with such vigour pursues that which we

* The world is styled by St. Basil, τῶν ψυχῶν λογικῶν διδασκαλεῖον, καὶ τῆς διαγνώσεως παιδευτήριον; School of rational spirits, wherein they are instructed in the knowledge of God.

† The mere consideration of the least parts of man's body, opened the eyes of one of the most learned atheists in the world. *Galen.* 3. *de usu partium*, describing the use of our parts, saith, τὸ δημιουργῆσαν ἡμᾶς ὕμνον ἀληθινὸν συντιθήσομεν.

esteem amiable and good, and recoils with aversation from that we judge pernicious and evil; the memory which preserves fresh and lively the pictures of those things which are committed to its charge. Certainly after this consideration, we must naturally assent there is a God who made us, and not we ourselves.

3. We may argue there is a God from the operations of natural agents for those ends which are not perceived by them. Although in men there is a rational principle which discovers the goodness of the end, and selects such means as are proper for the accomplishing of it, and so their actions are the product of their judgment; * yet it is impossible to conceive that the inferior rank of creatures, whose motions flow from mere instinct, can guide themselves by any counsel of their own: now all their operations are directed to their proper ends without any variation, and in that order as exceeds the invention of man. It is admirable to consider how brute creatures act for their preservation; they are no sooner in the world, but they presently fly from their enemies, and make use either of that force or craft which they have to defend themselves; they know that nourishment which is convenient to preserve them, and those remedies which may restore them. By what counsel doth the swallow observe the season of its passage? In the beginning of autumn it takes its flight to a warmer climate, and returns with the sun again in the spring. By what fore-sight doth the ant prepare its store in summer to prevent that ensuing want which otherwise it would suffer in winter? Doth the sun deliberate whether it shall rise, and by diffusing its beams, become the public light of the world? Or doth a fountain advise whether it shall stream forth in a fluent and liberal manner? Even the actions of men which are purely natural, are done without their direction: nay, natural bodies will part with their own property, and cross their own inclination for an universal good; the air, a light and nimble body that does naturally ascend, yet for a general good, to prevent a breach in nature, it will descend: † and

* Si quid est quod efficiat ea quæ homo licet ratione sit præditus, facere non posset, id profecto est majus & fortius, & sapientius homine. *Chrysippus.*

† ὅπερ ἐν νηΐ κυβερνήτης, ἐν χορῷ δὲ χορυφαῖος, ἐν πόλει δὲ νόμος, ἐν στρατοπέδῳ δὲ ἡγεμών, τοῦτο Θεὸς ἐν κόσμῳ. *Aristot. l. de mundo.*

those things which have a natural opposition, yet constantly accord and join together to preserve the whole; certainly then a divine spirit guides and directs them. If we see an army composed of several nations, (between whom there are great antipathies) yet march in rank and order, and with equal courage fight for the safety of a kingdom, we presently conclude there is a wise general who thus uniteth them: and is there not greater reason to believe that a sovereign spirit governs the host of heaven and earth, and unites them to maintain the peace of the world? To assert that irrational creatures act for a general and unknown good, without the motion of a higher cause, is equally unreasonable, as to say a curious picture is drawn by a pencil without the hand of the painter which guides it in every line according to the idea of his mind. We must then of necessity infer that those particular causes which cannot conduct themselves, are directed by an universal cause which cannot err; and thus we see the whole world is an entire and continual argument of God's being and attributes.

Secondly, The second argument is drawn from natural conscience, which is a subordinate God, and acts all things with respect to a higher tribunal; as St. Paul speaking of those visible testimonies which God hath expressed to men in the creation, saith, Acts 14. 17. "That he left not himself without a witness, giving them rain, and fruitful seasons;" by the same proportion we may say God hath not left himself without an internal witness, having planted in every man a conscience whereby he is dignified above the lower order of beings, and made sensible of the supreme judge, to whose tribunal he is subject; now conscience in its double work, as it accuses or excuses by turns upon good or bad actions, proves there is a God.

1. Natural conscience being clear and innocent, is the life-guard which secures from fears; virtuous persons who have not offered violence to the light of conscience, in times of danger, as in a fierce storm at sea, or fearful thunder at land, when guilty spirits are surprised with horror, they are not liable to those fears, being wrapped up in their own innocency; the reason of their security proceeds from a belief that those terrible works of nature are ordered by an intelligent and righteous providence which is God. *

* Parcus Deorum cultor & infrequens, insanientis dum sapientiæ consul-

2. It gives courage and support to an innocent person; when oppressed and injured by the unrighteous; the natural conscience so long as it is true to itself by adhering to honest principles, it is victorious against all attempts whatsoever; *si fractus illabatur orbis;* if the weight of all the miseries in the world should come rushing upon him at once, it would bear up under them all, and stand unbroken in the midst of those ruins; the spirit of a man is of strength enough to sustain all his infirmities; as a ship lives in the rough seas, and floats above them, the waters being without it; so a virtuous person rides out all storms, and is preserved from sinking, because the fury of worldly troubles cannot reach beyond his outward man; the conscience which is the man's strength remains firm and unshaken; yea, as those roses are usually sweetest which grow near stinking weeds; so the peace, joy, and glory of a good conscience is then most sensible, when a man is otherwise in the most afflicted and oppressed state; now from whence proceed this calmness and serenity, this vigour and constancy of spirit, but from the apprehension of a supreme judge, who at the last will vindicate their cause?

2. We may clearly evidence there is a God, from the accusations of a guilty conscience; this is that never dying worm which if a sinner treads on, it will turn again; this is a temporal hell, a spiritual Tophet; what torments are there in the regions of darkness, which an accusing conscience doth not inflict on a sinner in this life! So intolerable are the stings of it, that many have took sanctuary in a grave, and run upon the first death to prevent the miseries of the second. Now the shame, horror, despair, and that black train of affections which lash an offender for his vicious acts, discovers there is a principle within which threatens vengeance from a righteous and angry God: this argument will be more pressing, if we consider that conscience attaches a sinner.

(1.) For secret crimes, which are above the cognizance of men; conscience is God's spy in our bosoms, which mixes itself with all our thoughts and actions; let a man therefore take what course he will to hide his offence, let him sin in the closest retirement that human policy can contrive, where there is no

tus erro, nunc retrorsum vela dare atque iterare cursus cogor relictos: Namque Diespiter igni corusco nubila dividens, fretumque per purum tonantes egit equos volucremque currum. *Horat. ad.* 34. *l.* 31.

possibility of legal conviction, yet his accuser, his judge, his hell is in his own bosom; when the sin is most secret, conscience brings in the evidence, produces the law, urges the penalty, passes the sentence, begins the punishment; so that the sinner is *αὐτοκατάκριτος*, self-condemned for those sins which are not punishable by man; yea, sometimes a discovery of concealed sins (though certainly bringing temporal death) hath been extorted by the horror and anguish of an accusing conscience; the reason of all is, because in secret sins conscience appeals to God's omnisciency, who is greater than our consciences, "and knows all things." 1 John 3. 20. And upon this account it is *prejudicium judicii*, a kind of antedated day of judgment, a domestical dooms-day, and brings upon a sinner the beginning of his sorrows.

(2.) It stings with remorse for those sins which are above the power of man to revenge; those who command armies, and by their greatness are secured from the penalties of the law, yet conscience sets their sins in order before their eyes; and these as so many armed men charge them thorough, and overwhelm them; many instances there are; Belshazzar in the midst of his cups and bravery, how was he invaded by fear and horror, when "he saw the hand-writing on the wall!" The whole army of the Persians could not discourage his spirit; but when conscience revived his guilt, and the apprehension of God's justice, he sunk under the burden; the hand-writing from without was terrible, because conscience opened a hand-writing within. Tiberius the emperor who was doubly dyed in unnatural lusts and cruelties, could neither evade nor dissemble the horrors of his mind. Nero after the barbarous murdering of his mother, was always pursued by imaginary devils, his distracted fancy representing to him furies and flames ready to torment him. How many tyrants have trembled on the throne, when the condemned innocents have rejoiced in their sufferings! From hence we may infallibly conclude the conscience of the most powerful sinner is under the feeling of a Deity; for if there were no punishments to be feared but those the magistrate inflicts in his own dominions, why are sovereign magistrates themselves under terrors for their vitious actions! and those who are not subject to any human tribunal, why do they with such fury reflect upon themselves for their crimes? Certainly it proceeds from hence, that

natural conscience dreads the supreme Judge, seeing nothing is able to shelter them from his tribunal, nor restrain his power when he willl take vengeance on them.

In vain doth the atheist reply that these fears are the product of a common false opinion, which is conveyed by education, to wit, that there is a God who is provoked by sin; and that ignorance increases these terrors, as little children fear bug-bears in the dark; for it is certain,

1. That no art or endeavour can totally free a sinner from these terrors, whereas groundless fears are presently scattered by reason; and this argues there is an inviolable principle in nature which respects a God. We know there is nothing more disturbs the spirit than fear, and every person is an enemy to what torments him; hence the sinner labours to conquer conscience, that he may freely indulge himself in sin; but this is impossible; for conscience is so essential, that a soul cannot be a soul without it, and so inseparable, that death itself cannot divorce a man from it; *perire nec sine te nec tecum potest;* it can neither die with the sinner, nor without him; it is true, the workings of it are unequal; as the pulse doth not always beat alike, but sometimes more violent, and sometimes more remiss; so this spiritual pulse is not always in equal motion; sometimes it beats, sometimes it intermits, but returns again: those scorners who run a course of sin without control, and seem to despise hell, as a mere notion, yet they are not free from inward gripes: conscience arrests them in the name of that God whom they deny: although they are without faith, they are not without fear: desperate sinners ruffle for a time, and drench themselves in sensual pleasures, to quench that *scintilla animæ*, that vital spark which shines and scorches at once; but all in vain; for it happens to them as to malefactors, who for a time drown the apprehension of their danger in a sea of drink; but when the fumes are evaporated, and they seriously ponder their offences, they tremble in the fearful expectation of the axe or gallows. A sinner may conceal his fears from others, and appear jolly and brave, when conscience stings him with secret remorse; as a clock seems to be calm and still to the eye; but it is full of secret motions within; under a merry countenance there may be a bleeding heart: to conclude, so far is a sinner from being able to quench these terrors, that many times the more they are opposed, the more powerful they grow; thus

many who for a time breathed nothing but defiance to conscience, and committed sin with greediness, yet conscience hath with such fury returned upon them, that they have run from profaneness to superstition, as fugitive slaves are forced back to their masters, and serve in the vilest drudgery, fearing severe punishments.

2. The best men who enjoy a sweet calmness, and are not disquieted with the terrors of conscience, they abhor that doctrine which discards the fear of a Deity; so that those who are most freed from these terrors, believe them to be radicated in nature, and grounded upon truth; and those who esteem them vain, are most furiously tormented with them; in which respect the divine goodness shines forth in the greatest lustre towards those who love and fear him, and his justice against those who contemn it; thus Caligula who was the boldest atheist in the world, yet when it thundered, ran with trembling under his bed, as if God from heaven had summoned him to judgment; whereas Socrates, who was the heathens' martyr, died with the same tranquillity of spirit wherein he lived.

3. It is worthy of our serious thoughts that these terrors of conscience are most dreadful when the sinner approaches death; the sense of guilt which before was smothered, is then revived; conscience like a sleeping lion awakes and destroys at once; experience tells us many sinners who have lived in a senseless, die in a desperate manner; and from whence doth this proceed but from the presages of a future judgment! conscience anticipates the vengeance of God; then the alarms are increased, and the storm is more violent; for the soul being sensible of its immortal nature, extends its fears to eternity, and trembles at him who lives for ever, and can punish for ever.

Thirdly. The third argument is drawn from the consent of nations. The consent of nations agrees in the belief of a God; although the Gentiles did grossly mistake the life and essence of the infinite Deity, imagining him to be of some human form and weakness, and in this respect were without God in the world; yet they conspired in the acknowledgment of a divinity; the multiplicity of their false gods strengthens the argument; it being clear they would rather have any god than none; and this belief cannot be an imposture, because it is

1st. Universal; what nation so barbarous as not to worship a

God? certainly that which is common to all men, hath a foundation in nature.

2dly. It is perpetual; falsehoods are not long lived; but the character and impression of God is indelibly sealed upon the spirits of men. Thus we see the universal reason of the world to determine there is a God.

The scripture proves there is a God to faith; Psal. 19. David speaking of the double manifestation of God by his works and his word, appropriates a converting power to the word; this exceeds the discovery of God in the creation, in respect of its clearness and efficacy: Psal. 138. 2." Thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name." There are more apparent characters of God's attributes and perfections in the scripture, than in the book of nature; in the creation there is Vestigium, the foot-print of God; but in the word there is Imago, his image and lively representation: as the angels when they assumed visible bodies, and appeared unto men; yet by the brightness and majesty of their appearance, discovered themselves to be above an human original; so the scriptures although conveyed to us in ordinary language and words, yet by their authority and sanctity evidence their divine descent; and that there is a holy and righteous God from whom they proceed.

There is a vehement objection urged by atheists * in all ages against a divine providence, and consequently against God's being: the afflicted state of innocency and goodness, and the prosperous state of oppression and wickedness. Honest men suffer, whilst the unrighteous and profane swim in the streams of prosperity; hence they concluded *fortuna certa, aut incerta natura*, had the charge of these sublunary things; † even the holy prophet himself was liable to this temptation, Psal. 73. 9, 10,

* We may hear the Tragedian thus resenting it:

Sed cur idem,
Qui tanta regis sub quo vasti
Pondera mundi librata suos
Ducunt orbes, hominum nimium
Securus ades; non sollicitus
Prodesse bonis, nocuisse malis. *Sen. Hippol.*

† Plutarch, and Seneca, and Cicero, have rendered satisfaction concerning this method of the divine providence.

11, 12, 13, 14. he saw that as the clean creatures were sacrificed every day, the turtle and the lamb, the emblems of innocency and charity; whilst the swine, and other unclean creatures were spared; so good men were harassed with troubles, when the wicked were exempted, and this shook his faith; but by "entering into the sanctuary of God." where he understood their end, he comes off with victory. Now for the removing this objection, consider,

1. We are not competent judges of God's actions; we see but one half of Ezekiel's vision; the wheels, but not the eye in the wheels; nothing but the wheels on which the world seems disorderly to run, not the eye of providence which governs them in their most vertiginous changes: the actions of God do not want clearness, but clearing: what we cannot acquit, is not to be charged on God as unjust; the stick which is straight, being in the water seems crooked, by the refraction of the beams through a double medium; we see through flesh and spirit, and cannot distinctly judge the ways of God; but when we are not able to comprehend the particular reasons of his dispensations, yet we must conclude his judgments to be right, as will appear by observing,

2. The sufferings of the righteous do not blemish God's justice.

(1.) God always strikes an offender, every man being guilty in respect of his law. Now though love cannot hate, yet it may be angry; and upon this account, where "the judgments of God are a great deep," unfathomable by any finite understanding, "yet his righteousness standeth like the high mountains," (as it is in Psal. 36.) visible to every eye; if the most righteous person shall look inward, and weigh his own carriage and desert, he must necessarily glorify the justice and holiness of God in all his proceedings.

(2.) The afflictions of good men are so far from staining God's justice, that they manifest his mercy; for the least sin being a greater evil than the greatest affliction; God uses temporal crosses to prevent and destroy sin; he imbitters their lives to wean their affections from the world, and to create in them strong desires after heaven; as long as the waters of tribulation are on the earth, so long they dwell in the ark; but when the land is dry, even the dove itself will be wandering, and defile

itself: when they are afflicted in their outward man, it is that the inward man may be revived; as birds are brought to perfection by the ruins of the shell: that is not a real evil which God uses as an instrument to save us. Who will esteem that physician unjust, who prevents the death of his patient by giving a bitter potion?

(3.) If the righteous be thus afflicted upon earth, we may conclude there is a reward in the next world; if they are thus sharply treated in the way, their country is above, where God is their portion and happiness.

3. The temporary prosperity of the wicked reflects no dishonour upon God's justice or holiness; for God measures all things by the standard of eternity; a thousand years to him are as one day. Now we do not charge a judge with unrighteousness, if he defer the execution of a malefactor for a day; the longest life of a sinner bears not that proportion to eternity; besides, their reprieve increases and secures their ruin; they are as grapes which hang in the sun till they are ripe, and fit for the wine-press. God spares them now, but will punish them for ever; he condemns them to prosperity in this world, and judges them not worth his anger, intending to pour forth the vials of his wrath on them in the next.

4. The more sober heathens have concluded from hence there is a judgment to come; because otherwise the best would be most miserable, and the ungodly prosperous; from hence they have inferred, that because all things are dispensed in a promiscuous manner to the just and unjust in this world, therefore there must be an after-reckoning.

5. There are many visible examples of the goodness and justice of God in this world; either in rewarding afflicted innocency, or punishing prosperous iniquities. He that shall read the story of Joseph, and consider that wonderful chain of causes managed by the divine providence; how God made use of the treachery of his brethren, not as a sale, but a conveyance; how by the prison he came to the principality, must conclude there is a watchful eye which orders all things: and how many instances are there of God's severe, and impartial justice? there is no state or history but presents some examples; wherein an exact proportion in the time, measure and kind between the sin and punishment, is most conspicuous; the unnatural sin of Sodom was

punished with a supernatural shower of fire and brimstone: Pharaoh had made the river guilty of the blood of the Hebrew infants; his first plague is the turning of the river into blood; Adonibezec is just so served as he did by the seventy kings; Judas who wanted bowels for his Lord, wanted bowels for himself in life and death; for he hanged himself, and his bowels gushed out; and thus the punishment as a hand, points at the sin, and convinces the world of a Deity.

Use 1. This is just matter of terror to atheists, which are

of three sorts; { 1. *Vita;* in Life. 2. *Voto;* in Desire. 3. *Judicio;* in Judgment.

First. To those who are practical atheists, *Vita*, in life, who live down this truth, denying God in their lives. Sad and certain it is, that many who pretend they know God, yet so live, as if there were no Deity to whom they must give an account: such are the secure, that sleep in sin, notwithstanding all God's thunder; and if ever sleep were the true image of death, this is the sleep. The sensual, who are so lost in carnal pleasures, they scarce remember whether they have a soul; if at any time conscience begins to murmur, they relieve their melancholy thoughts with their company and cups, like Saul, sending for the music when the evil spirit was upon him. The incorrigible, who notwithstanding the designs of God's mercy to reduce them; although providences, ordinances conspire to bring them off from their evil ways; yet they persist in their disobedience: let such consider it is not a loose and ineffective assent to the being and perfections of God which will save them; God is not glorified by an inactive faith; nay, this will put the most dreadful accent, and the most killing aggravations on their sins; that believing there is a God, they dare presumptuously offend him, and provoke the Almighty to jealousy, as if they were able either to evade, or to sustain his wrath; it is the greatest prodigy in the world to believe there is a God, and yet to disobey him; this renders them inexcusable at the last.

Secondly. To those who are atheists, *Voto*, in desire, Psal. 14. "The fool hath said in his heart there is no God;" the heart is the fountain of desires, he wishes there were no God; this

atheism springs from the former; men live as if there were no God, and then wish there were none; guilt always begets fear, and fear hatred; and that strikes at the being of the object that is hated; as malefactors desire there were no law nor judge, that they might escape deserved punishment. Well, their desires are as visible to God as their actions are to men, and in the day of revelation there will be a proportion of wrath answerable to the wickedness of their hearts.

Thirdly, To those who are atheists, *Judicio*, in opinion; these low running dregs of time afford us many of these monsters; for many to reconcile their principles with their practices; that they may undisturbedly enjoy their lusts, take this as an opiate portion, that there is no God; but this is the most irrational and impious blasphemy.

1. Irrational; for the name of God is written in so fair a character upon this universal frame, that even whilst men run they may read it; and therefore God never wrought a miracle to convince atheism, because his ordinary works convince it: moreover, the notion of a Deity is so deeply impressed on the tables of all men's hearts, that to deny God, is to kill the soul in the eye, to quench the very principles of common nature, to leave never a vital spark or seed of humanity behind; it is as if an ungracious soul should deny he ever had a father. He that does ungod God, does unman himself.

2. It is the most impious; it is formally *Deicidium*, a killing of God as much as in them lies; but there are no atheists in hell, the devils believe and tremble; he that willingly quenches that light which is planted in his breast, he is passing from that voluntary darkness to a worse; like an offender on the scaffold, he doth but blind his eyes to have his head cut off; he goes from inward darkness to utter darkness.

Use 2. Let us establish our hearts in the belief of God's being; in the latter times the world is wholly disposed to atheism; as the scripture attributes the ruin of the old world to their atheism and profaneness, so it foretels the universal disease of the last age will be atheism and infidelity. Luke 18. 8. "Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" it were impossible there should be such a palpable contradiction between the lives of men and this fundamental of religion, did they with assurance and certainty believe it. Psal.

14. 1. "The fool hath said in his heart there is no God; they are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doth good." Atheism is the root of profaneness; moreover, the spiritual mysteries of religion, which exceed the flight of reason, are opposed by many upon the account of their atheism; they question the truth of God's being, and therefore disbelieve supernatural revelations; let us then treasure up this truth:

First. As the foundation of faith; for all the truths of religion spring from this as their common principle; the watering of the root will cause the branches to flourish; so the confirming of this will render our assent to the doctrine of the gospel more clear and strong.

Secondly. As the fountain of obedience; the true and sound belief of every holy truth always includes a correspondency in the believer to the thing believed; and this must descend from the understanding to the affections, and the conversation: now the fundamental duties which we are to pay to God, are, love, fear, dependance and submission to the will of his law, and of his providence.

1. *Love:* He is the supreme object of love for his excellencies and benefits, Psal. 5. 11. "Let them also that love thy name rejoice in thee;" the name of God imports those glorious attributes whereby he hath expressed himself to us; all the excellencies of the creature meet eminently in him, and all their imperfections are removed; in him there is nothing unlovely. In worldly things how refined soever they be, there is an allay of dregs; the all that is in them is mixed with corruption; but in God the all that he is, is perfection; in the most glorious creature as a creature, there is *aliquid nihili*, some imperfection, it is not exactly fitted for the soul; but God is the adequate and complete object of our love. There is such an infinite eminency in God, that we are obliged to a proportionable affection; the first and great commandment is, Matth. 22. 36. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy strength:" all the kinds and degrees of our love are due to him; we must put no bounds nor limits to it; in him it must begin, in him it must end; a remisser love is a degree of hatred; we disparage his excellencies by the coldness of our affections. O had we but eyes to see his beauty, how would all the excellencies

of the creatures become a very glow-worm that only glitters in the night!

Moreover, God planted this affection in the nature of man, that it might be terminated upon himself as its centre and treasure. As our natural faculties are fitted for their several objects; the eye for colours, the ear for sounds, the palate for tastes; so love is fitted for God, that being as the sovereign which sways all our powers. Love is called *pondus animæ*, that sets all the wheels in the clock of the soul a going; this sets the understanding at work in the serious contemplation of the divine excellencies, it diverts the thoughts from other things, and fixes them on God; it excites strong desires, and earnest aspirings after him; it stirs up zeal, which is *flamma amoris*, love in a flame, to remove all obstacles which hinder the most intimate union with him; it produces joy, when the soul reposes itself in God, and with infinite sweetness possesses him; it causes the greatest diligence, alacrity, and resolution in all our ways to please him: for love is ever the spring and rule of all our actions; such as it is, such likewise will they be: thus we may see that God (as there is in him an union of all excellencies) challenges the most intense and vehement degree of our love, he being only fitted for it; and that our love being a superlative affection, is only proper to God; and therefore to love any creature without God, or in an equal manner to him, is to deify the creature, to place it in the room of God, and so it renders us guilty of idolatry in a spiritual sense. But such is the ignorance of men's minds, and the depravedness of their wills, that few there be who love God; it is true, there may be something like love in natural men to God, grounded upon the persuasion of his glorious being, and the goodness of his nature, which is not terrible to them; but when they consider his mercy is a holy mercy, and that it is never dispensed to the prejudice of his justice, though they cannot hate God for his goodness directly, yet they hate him with it; for although he is the perfection of beauty and goodness itself, yet they being evil, there is no congruity or conveniency between God and them; they love sin, and hate punishment: now God as *Author legis*, by the most strict laws forbids sin, and as *ultor peccati*, inflicts severe punishments; from hence it proceeds, the most lovely and sweet attributes of God cannot endear him to them; no more than the natural or moral excellencies of a

judge, the comeliness of his person, or his wisdom and knowledge can draw forth the love of a malefactor when he is condemned by him.

Moreover, since the general nature of sin is an eternal contrariety to the nature and will of God; the love of it must needs argue the hatred of God; for as the Lord Jesus requires an universal, cheerful and constant obedience, as the most clear evidence of love to him; "if you love me, keep my commandments;" so the argument will be as strong to conclude backward. If you keep not God's commandments, you hate him; to live in the practice of known sins, is a virtual and interpretative hatred of God.

2. The benefits which God bestows upon us deserve our love. How great an endearment did he pass upon us in our creation? We might have been admitted into the lowest form of creatures, and have only enjoyed the life of flies or worms; but "he made us little lower than the angels, and crowned us with glory and honour, and gave us dominion over all the works of his hands." Psal. 8. 5. Whereas the rest of the creatures were the acts of his power; the creation of man was an act of power and wisdom; in all the rest there was nothing, but "he spake the word, and they were made." Psal. 148. 5. But in the making of man there was a consultation about it, Gen. I. "Let us make man;" he framed our bodies, so that all the parts conspire for the ornament and service of the whole: Psal. 139. 15. "Thine eye did see my substance being yet imperfect, and in thy book were all my members written;" and therefore Lactantius said truly, *hominem non patrem esse sed generandi ministrum;* man is only the instrument which the Lord doth use for the effecting of his purpose to raise the beautiful fabric of man's body: now if we are obliged to express the dearest love to our parents, with how much greater reason should we love God, who is the fountain of all our beings?

He hath breathed into man a spiritual, immortal, rational soul, which is more worth than the whole world; this is in some sort a spark and ray of divine brightness; it is capable of God's image, it is a fit companion for angels, to join with them in the praises of God, and enjoy a blessed eternity with them. It is capable of communion with God himself, who is the fountain of

life and happiness. The soul is endowed with those faculties which being terminated upon God, it enjoys an infinite and everlasting blessedness. The understanding by knowledge rests in God as the first and highest *in generi veri;* the will by love embraces him as the last and greatest *in genere boni;* and so receives perfection and satisfaction, which is the incommunicable privilege of the rational soul. Beasts can only converse with drossy and material objects, they are confined to earthly things; but the soul of man may enjoy the possession and fruition of God, who is the supreme and sovereign good. Now this should inflame our love to God; he formed our bodies, he inspired our souls. Moreover, if we consider our lives, we shall find a chain of mercy which reaches from one end to the other of them.

How many miracles of providence do we enjoy in our preservation? how many unseen dangers do we escape? how great are our daily supplies? The provisions we receive, do serve not only for necessity, but for delight; every day we have the provisions of meat and drink not only to cure hunger, and all our thirst, but to refresh the heart, and to make us cheerful in our work; every hour is filled with the bounties of God: now what shall we render to the Lord for all his benefits? he desires our love; this is the most proper return we can make; for love is of an opening and expansive quality calling forth the heart; our love within should break forth to close with God's love without; the love of obedience in us, with the love of favour and bounty in him. It is a principle of nature deeply implanted in the hearts of men, to return love for love; nay, the very beasts are not deficient in this; Isa. 1. 3. "the ox knows his owner, and the ass his master's crib:" those creatures which are of all the most stupid and heavy, respect their feeders, and express dumb signs of love unto them. How much more should we love God, who spreads our table, fills our cup, and causes his sun to shine, and his rain to fall on us? It is an argument of secret atheism in the heart, that in the confluence of mercies we enjoy, we do not look up to the Author of them, as if common mercies were the effects of chance, and not of providence; if a man constantly relieves our wants, we judge it the most barbarous disingenuity not to repay love to him; but God loads us with his benefits

every day; his wisdom is always busied to serve his mercy, and his mercy to serve our necessities, but we are insensible and unaffected; and yet the meanest mercy as it comes from God hath an excellency stamped upon it. We should upbraid our souls for our coldness to God; every where we encounter sensible demonstrations of his love to us; in every moment of our lives we have some pledges of his goodness. Let us light our torch at this mountain of fire; let the renewed acts of his bounty constrain us to love him; we should love him for his excellency, though we had no benefit by him; nay, though he hated us, we are bound to love him; as he is truly amiable in himself; how much more when he draws us with the cords of a man, with bands of love? whosoever requites the love of God with hatred, (as every impenitent sinner doth) puts off the nature of man, and degenerates into a devil.

2. *Fear;* this is that eternal respect which is due to our Creator; an humble reverence we owe to him, as he is infinitely above us; the holy angels cover their faces when they have the clearest views of his glory: Isa. 6. 1, 2, 3. the Lord is represented as sitting on a throne, "and the seraphims stood about, each having six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain his feet, and with twain did he fly; and one cried to another, holy, holy, holy Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory:" the angels are pure and innocent creatures; they fear not his angry justice, but they adore his excellencies and perfections; he is a dread, when a most serene majesty. Penal fear is inconsistent with the joys of heaven, but the fear of admiration is perfected there; and in this sense the "fear of God continues for ever." Psal. 19. 9. In all our addresses to him we should compose our spirits, by the awful apprehension of that infinite distance which is between God and us. Eccles. 5. 2. "Let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God; for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth;" the greatest distance in nature is but an imperfect discovery how much we are beneath God; it is the effect of grace to represent the divine being and glory so to the soul, that in the most social duties it may have impressions of fear; Psal. 2. 11. "serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling." We should fear his greatness and power, in whose hands our life and breath, and all

our ways are; the fear of God having its actual force upon the soul, is operative and instrumental to holy walking, from whence the fear of God is taken in scripture for the whole duty of man, it being an introduction to it. "The fear of God and keeping his commandments" are joined together." Eccles. 12. 13. This is the *præpositus* which governs our actions according to God's will; this is a watchful sentinel against the most pleasant temptations; it kills delight in sin, (by which the integrity of most men is lost;) for delight cannot dwell with fear; this is the guard and security of the soul in the days of trouble; the fear of God countermines the fear of men; this cuts off base and unworthy complyings; therefore the Lord brings this as an antidote against the base fear of men; Isa. 51. 12, 13. "Who art thou, that thou shouldst be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man, that shall be made as grass? and forgettest the Lord thy maker, that stretcheth forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth?" This exalts a christian above human frailty, and makes him despise the threatenings of the world, whereby many are terrified from their constancy. It is the most unreasonable thing to be cowards to men and fearless of God. Men have but finite power, and so they cannot do that hurt they would; and they are under the divine providence, and therefore are disabled from doing that hurt, which otherwise they could do; but the power of God is absolute and unconfined; therefore our Saviour presses with vehemency upon his disciples, Matt. 10. 28. 'Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him who is able to destroy both body and soul in hell:" he lives for ever, and can punish for ever, therefore when duty and life cannot stand together, he that flies the danger by delivering up his soul, exchanges the pain of a moment for the torments of eternity: * Austin upbraids the folly of such; 'they fear the prison, but they fear not hell; they fear temporal torment, but they fear not the pains of unquenchable fire; they fear the first but not the second death.'

3. *Dependance*, in respect of his all-sufficiency to supply our wants; and omnipotency to secure us from dangers.

* Timent carcerem, non timent gehennam, timent cruciatum temporalem, non pœnas ignis æterni; timent modicum mori, non æternum mori.

First. His all-sufficiency can supply our wants; he is the sun, fountain, and mine of all that is good; from hence the prophet glories in God, Habbak. 3. 17, 18. "Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olives shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." He expresses not only things for delight, as the "fruit of the vine and fig-tree," but things for necessity, as "the meat of the field," and the "flocks of the stall," and the utter failing of these together; for otherwise the want of one might be supplied by the enjoyment of another. Now in the absolute loss of these supports and comforts of life, the prophet saw all things in God; want of all outward things is infinitely recompensed in the presence of God: the sun needs not the glimmering light of the stars to make day; God without the assistance of the creatures can make us really happy; in the enjoying of him we have all things, and that to the greatest advantage. The things of this world deceive our expectations, and draw forth our corruptions; but in God we enjoy them more refinedly; and more satisfyingly; the dregs of sin and sorrow being removed; by possessing God there is no burden which we are not able to bear, but he takes it away, our wants, weakness and sufferings; and there is no excellency of his which we are able to enjoy, but he conveys to us, his grace, his glory. There is true riches in his favour, true honour in his approbation, true pleasure in his peace. He is the treasure and triumph of the soul. Lam. 3. 24. "The Lord is my portion, saith my soul, therefore will I hope in him:" he is such a portion, that all temporal crosses cannot hinder its influence on us, and his influxive presence makes heaven; he is a portion that cannot be lost, he inseparably abides with the soul.

The real belief and application of this will keep a saint in a holy independency on earthly things; * the flames which shall burn the world, cannot touch his portion; he may stand upon its ruins, and say, I have lost nothing.

Moreover, this will keep the soul upright in the course of obedience; for all the exorbitances and swervings from the rule

* Cum mundus exarserit, cogitat se nihil habere de tanta mole perdendum.

proceed from the apprehensions of some particular good in the creature, which draws men aside. Those who want the light of faith (which discovers God's all-sufficiency) only admire present and sensible things; and to obtain these, they depart from God; but the more eagerly they seek after these temporal good things, the further they run from the fountain of goodness, which alone can sweeten the best things we enjoy; and counterbalance their absence. The creatures are but of a limited benignity, the necessity of their number proves the meanness of their value; but one God answers all, he is an infinite and indefective good; he is for all the powers of soul and body, to hold them in their pleasant exercise, and to give them rest; he is alone able to impart happiness, and to preserve that happiness he imparts.

Secondly. His omnipotency can secure us from dangers. The creation is a standing monument of his almighty power; for what but omnipotency could out of nothing produce the beautiful fabric of heaven and earth? man cannot work without materials, but God doth; and that which exalts his power, is, that he made it by his word; "he spake the word, and they were made," saith the psalmist, Psal. 33. 9. There went no greater pains to the world's creation, than God's command.

Moreover, the world is preserved from perishing by the power of its Maker. Certainly, without the support of his mighty hand, the world had long before this time relapsed to its primitive nothing: many instances we have of his power, in those miraculous deliverances which he hath shown to his people in their extremity; sometimes by suspension of the works of nature: his dividing the red sea, and making it as a solid wall, that the Israelites might have a secure passage! his stopping the sun in its course, that Joshua might have time to destroy his enemies! his suspending the nature of the fire, that it might not so much as singe the garments of the three Hebrews! his shutting the mouths of the devouring lions, and returning Daniel in safety from that dreadful den! And are not all these, and many others of this kind, not only the pregnant testimonies of his love, but the everlasting characters of his omnipotency. Moreover, that which expresses the power of God with as great a lustre, is the turning of the hearts of many cruel enemies from their intended rage to favour his people; thus did he change the heart of Esau, who had resolved the death of his brother; that

instead of killing him, he expressed the greatest tenderness, and the most endearing affections unto him; thus did he so sway the hearts of the Egyptians towards the oppressed Israelites, that instead of securing them under bondage, they encouraged their departure, by enriching them with jewels of silver and of gold. Exod. 12. 35. Now our duty is to glorify this power of God, by placing our trust on him. Psal. 121. 2, 3. "My help comes from the Lord, who made the heavens and the earth;" he will not suffer thy foot to be moved; by dependance on God the soul is composed in the midst of the most apparent dangers; as the upper region of the air is calm and serene, whatever storms are here below. Thus David expresses the same courage in all estates; when he was retired into a cave to shelter himself from the fury of Saul, he sung the fifty-seventh Psalm which he then composed; "my heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed, I will sing and give praise;" Psal. 57. 7. and afterwards when he triumphed over Hadadezer the King of Zebah, he composed the hundred and eighth Psalm, and sung the same words:" "O God, my heart is fixed, I will sing and give praise;" Psal. 108. 1. faith taught him the same song in the cave, and on the throne; in all our exigencies we should apply the power of God; the cause of our perplexing fears, is our low apprehensions of God's power, and therefore when we are surrounded with difficulties and dangers, then we are surprised with terror and despondency; whereas when there are visible means to rescue us, we lift up our heads; but our duty is in the greatest extremities to glorify his power, and to refer ourselves to his goodness; and though we cannot be certain that God will by miracles rescue us from dangers, as he did many of his people in former ages; yet we are sure he will so abate the power and force of the most injurious enemies, as they shall not conquer the patience, nor break the hope of his people.

4. We owe perfect *submission* to God's will; viz. subjection to his commands, and submission to his providence. 1. Subjection to his commands. As he is the first cause, so he is the supreme Lord; he that gave us life, must give us law: God hath an absolute title to our service as Creator; this made the psalmist desire the knowledge of God's commandments in order to his obedience. Psal. 119. 73. "Thy hands have made me, and fashioned me, give me understanding, that I may learn thy

commandments;" he may learn this from the universal obedience of all creatures, those which are without reason, sense or life, inviolably observe his commands. Isa. 48. 13. "Mine hand hath laid the foundations of the earth, and my right hand hath spanned the heavens, when I call to them they stand up together," as prepared to execute his commands. The insensible parts of the world are so compliant with his will, as to contradict their proper natures to serve his glory; fire descends from heaven at his command; the fluid sea stands up as a solid wall in obedience to him; this upbraids our degeneration and apostacy, that we who are most indebted to the goodness of our Creator, should prove disloyal and rebellious, when the inferior creatures with one consent serve and glorify him.

Lastly. We owe submission to the will of his providence; there is no shadow of exception can be formed against his sovereignty, he may do by right whatever he can do by power, therefore we should acquiesce in his dispensations; this consideration silenced David, Psal. 39. 9. "I held my tongue, and said nothing, because thou didst it;" as the presence of a grave person in authority quiets a disordered multitude; so the apprehension of God's supremacy composes our riotous thoughts and passions; unquietness of spirit in troubles, springs from the ignorance of God, and of ourselves; by impatience we cite God before our tribunal, and do as it were usurp his throne; we set up an antiprovidence, as if his wisdom should be taught by our folly; and sometimes in afflictions we eye the next cause, but do not look upward to the Sovereign Disposer of all things, like Balaam, who struck the ass, but did not see the angel which opposed him;" thus from a brutish imagination we regard the visible instrument of our trouble, but consider not the providence of God in all; from hence it is that our spirits are full of unquiet agitations; we live continually upon self-created racks: now the humble acknowledgment of God's hand, and the submitting of ourselves to his will, as it glorifies God, so it gives ease to us; as there is the greatest equity, so policy in our willing stooping to him, Rom. 14. 11. "As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God;" he engages his life and honour for this: if there is not a voluntary, there must be a violent subjection to him; the wilful man never wants woe; the spring of our daily misery, as well as our sins

is, opposition to God's will; but the cheerful resignation to his providence, what a blessed pill of rest is this to the soul? what a sabbath from all those sinful and penal disturbances which discompose our spirits; it is a lower heaven; for as in the state of glory there is an unchangeable agreement between the will of the Creator and the creature, so according to the same measure and degree wherein we conform our wills to God's, we proportionably enjoy the holiness and blessedness of that state.

SERMON II.

SIN THE MOST FORMIDABLE EVIL.

GEN. XXXIX. 9.

How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?

THE text is the record of Joseph's innocence and victory, consecrated in scripture for the honour and imitation of that excellent saint in succeeding ages. He had been tried by sharp afflictions, the conspiring envy of his brethren, and the cruel effects of it, banishment and servitude, "and possessed his soul in patience:" here he was encountered by a more dangerous temptation in another kind, and preserved his integrity. Adversity excites the spirit to serious recollection, arms it with resolution to endure the assaults, and stop the entrance of what is afflicting to nature: pleasure by gentle insinuation relaxes the mind to a loose security, softens and melts the heart, and makes it easily receptive of corrupt impressions.

Now to represent the grace of God, that preserved Joseph, in its radiance and efficacy, we must consider the several circumstances that increased the difficulty of the double victory, over the tempter, and himself.

1. The tempter, his mistress, who had divested the native modesty of the blushing sex, and by her caresses and blandish-

ments sought to draw him to compliance with her desires. Her superior quality might seem to make her request have the force of a command over him.

2. The solicitation, "lie with me." There are no sins to which there is a stronger inclination in our corrupted nature, than to acts of sensuality. The temptation was heightened by the lure of profit and advancement, that he might obtain by her favour, and interest in her husband, who was an eminent officer in the Egyptian court: and the denial would be extremely provoking, both in respect it seemed to be a contempt injurious to her dignity, and was a disappointment of her ardent expectation.* Hatred and revenge upon refusal, are equal to the lust of an imperious whorish woman. We read the effects of it, in this chapter: for upon his rejecting her desires, inflamed with rage, and to purge herself, she turned his accuser, wounded his reputation, deprived him of his liberty, and exposed his life to extreme peril. Joseph chose rather to lie in the dust, than to rise by sin.

3. The opportunity was ready, and the object present: it is said, "there was none of the men of the house within." She had the advantage of secrecy to fasten the temptation upon him. When a sin may be easily committed, and easily concealed, the restraints of fear and shame are taken off, and every breath of a temptation is strong enough to overthrow the carnally-minded. The purest and noblest chastity is from a principle of duty within, not constrained by the apprehension of discovery and severity.

4. The continuance of the temptation: "she spake to him day by day." Her complexion was lust and impudence, and his repeated denials were ineffectual to quench her incensed desires; the black fire that darkened her mind. "She caught him by the garment, saying, lie with me: she was ready to prostitute herself, and ravish him.

5. The person tempted, Joseph, in the flower of his age, the season of sensuality, when innumerable, by the force and swinge of their vicious appetites, are impelled to break the holy law of God.

* Regeramus ipse crimen, atq; ultro impiam venerem arguamus: scelere velandum est scelus. *Senec. Hippolitus.*

6. His repulse of the temptation was strong and peremptory: "how can I do this great wickedness?" He felt no sympathy, no sensual tenderness, but expressed an impossibility of consenting to her guilty desire. We have in Joseph exemplified that property of the regenerate, "he that is born of God, cannot sin:" 1 John 3. 9. by a sacred potent instinct in his breast, he is preserved not only from the consummate acts, but recoils from the first offers to it.

7. The reasons are specified of his rejecting her polluting motion. "Behold, my master knows not what is with me in the house, and he hath committed all that he hath to my hands: there is none greater in his house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" It was a complicated crime of injustice and uncleanness; a most injurious violation of the strongest ties of duty and gratitude to his master, and of the sacred marriage covenant to her husband, and the foulest blot to their persons: therefore "how can I commit a sin" so contrary to natural conscience, and supernatural grace, and provoke God? Thus I have briefly considered the narrative of Joseph's temptation; and that divine grace preserved him untouched from that contagious fire, may be resembled to the miraculous preserving the three Hebrew martyrs unsinged, in the midst of the flaming furnace. The patience of Job, and the chastity of Joseph, are transmitted by the secretaries of the Holy Ghost in scripture, to be in perpetual remembrance and admiration.

From this singular instance of Joseph, who was neither seduced by the allurements of his mistress, nor terrified by the rage of her despised affection, to sin against God, I shall observe two general points.

I. That temptations to sin, how alluring soever, or terrifying, ought to be rejected with abhorrence.

II. That the fear of God is a sure defence and guard against the strongest temptation.

I will explain and prove the first, and only speak a little of the second in a branch of the application.

I. That temptations to sin, how alluring soever, or terrifying, are to be rejected with abhorrence.

There will be convincing proof of this, by considering two

things;—That sin in its nature, prescinding from the train of woful effects, is the greatest evil;—2. That, relatively to us, it is the most pernicious destructive evil.

1. That sin considered in itself is the greatest evil. This will be evident by considering the general nature of it, as directly opposite to God the supreme good. The definition of sin expresses its essential evil; "it is the transgression of the divine law," and consequently opposes the rights of God's throne, and obscures the glory of his attributes that are exercised in the moral government of the world. God, as Creator, "is our King, our Lawgiver and Judge. From his propriety in us arises his just title to sovereign power over us: "know ye that the Lord he is God; it is he that made us, not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture." Psal. 100. The creatures of a lower order are incapable of distinguishing between moral good and evil, and are determined by the weight of nature to what is merely sensible, and therefore are incapable of a law to regulate their choice. But man, who is endowed with the powers of understanding and election, to conceive and choose what is good, and reject what is evil, is governed by a law, the declared will of his maker: accordingly a law, the rule of his obedience, was written in his heart.

Now sin, the transgression of this law, contains many great evils.

(1.) Sin is a rebellion against the sovereign majesty of God, that gives the life of authority to the law. Therefore divine precepts are enforced with the most proper and binding motive to obedience, "I am the Lord." He that with purpose and pleasure commits sin, implicitly renounces his dependance upon God, as his maker and governor, overrules the law, and arrogates an irresponsible license to do his own will. This is expressed by those atheistical designers, who said, "with our tongue we will prevail, our lips are our own; who is lord over us?" Psal. 12. 4. The language of actions, that is more natural and convincing than of words, declares that sinful men despise the commands of God, as if they were not his creatures and subjects. What a dishonour, what a displeasure is it to the God of glory, that proud dust should fly in his face, and control his authority? "He has ten thousand times ten thousand angels that are high in dignity, and excel in strength, waiting in a posture of reverence

and observance about his throne, ready to do his will:" Dan. 7. 10. Psal. 103. 20. how provoking is it for a despicable worm to contravene his law, and lift his hand against him? It will be no excuse to plead the commands of men for sin: for as much as God is more glorious than men, so much more are his commands to be respected and obeyed than men's. When there is an evident opposition between the laws of men and of God, we must disobey our superiors, though we displease them, and obey our supreme ruler. He that does what is forbidden, or neglects to do what is commanded by the divine law, to please men, though invested with the highest sovereignty on earth, is guilty of double wickedness; of impiety, in deposing God; and idolatry, in deifying men.

It is an extreme aggravation of this evil, in that sin as it is a disclaiming our homage to God, so it is in true account a yielding subjection to the devil. For sin is in the strictest propriety his work. The original rebellion in paradise was by his temptation, and all the actual and habitual sins of men since the fall, are by his efficacious influence. "He darkens the carnal mind," and sways the polluted will; he excites and inflames the vicious affections, and imperiously "rules in the children of disobedience. 2 Cor. 4. 4. Ephes. 2. 2. He is therefore styled "the prince and God of this world." And what more contumelious indignity can there be, than the preferring to the glorious Creator of heaven and earth, a damned spirit, the most cursed part of the creation? It is most reasonable, that the baseness of the competitor, should be a foil to reinforce the lustre of God's authority: yet men reject God, and comply with the tempter. O prodigious perverseness!

(2). Sin vilifies the ruling wisdom of God, that prescribed the law to men. Although the dominion of God over us be supreme and absolute, yet it is exercised according "to the counsel of his will," by the best means, for the best ends; he is accordingly styled by the apostle, "the eternal King, and only wise God." 1 Tim. 1. It is the glorious prerogative of his sovereignty and deity, that he can do no wrong: for he necessarily acts according to the excellencies of his nature. Particularly, his wisdom is so relucent in his laws, that the serious contemplation of it, will ravish the sincere minds of men into a compliance with them. They are framed with exact congruity to the nature of God, and

his relation to us, and to the faculties of man before he was corrupted. From hence the divine law being the transcript not only of God's will, but his wisdom, binds the understanding and will, our leading faculties, to esteem and approve, to consent and choose all his precepts as best. Now sin vilifies the infinite understanding of God with respect both to the precepts of the law, the rule of our duty, and the sanction annexed to confirm its obligation. It does constructively tax the precepts as unequal, too rigid and severe a confinement to our wills and actions. Thus the impious rebels complain, "the ways of the Lord are not equal," as injurious to their liberty, and not worthy of observance. What St. James saith, to correct the uncharitable, censorious humour of some in his time, "he that speaks evil of his brother, and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law, and judges the law," Jam. 4. 11. as an imperfect and rash rule, is applicable to sinners in any other kind. As an unskilful hand by straining too high, breaks the strings of an instrument, and spoils the music; so the strictness and the severity of the precepts, break the harmonious agreement between the wills of men and the law, and cast an imputation of imprudence upon the lawgiver. This is the implicit blasphemy in sin.

Besides, the law has rewards and punishments, to secure our respects and obedience to it. The wise God knows the frame of the reasonable creature, what are the inward springs of our actions; and has accordingly propounded such motives to our hope and fear, the most active passions, as may engage us to perform our duty. He promises his "favour that is better than life," to the obedient, and threatens "his wrath, that is worse than death, to the rebellious." Now sin makes it evident, that these motives are not effectual in the minds of men: and this reflects upon the wisdom of the lawgiver, as if defective in not binding his subjects firmly to their duty; for if the advantage or pleasure that may be gained by sin, be greater than the reward that is promised to obedience, and the punishment that is threatened against the transgression, the law is unable to restrain from sin, and the ends of government are not obtained. Thus sinners in venturing upon forbidden things, reproach the understanding of the divine lawgiver.

(3.) Sin is a contrariety to the unspotted holiness of God. Of all the glorious and benign constellations of the divine attributes

that shine in the law of God, his holiness has the brightest lustre. God is holy in all his works, but the most venerable and precious monument of his holiness is the law. For the holiness of God consists in the correspondence of his will and actions with his moral perfections, wisdom, goodness and justice; and the law is the perfect copy of his nature and will. The psalmist who had a purged eye, saw and admired its purity and perfection. "The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes." Psal. 19. "The word is very near, therefore thy servant loves it." Psal. 119. 140. It is the perspicuous rule of our duty without blemish or imperfection; "the commandment is holy, just and good." It enjoins nothing but what is absolutely good, without the least tincture of evil. The sum of it is set down by the apostle, to "live soberly," that is, to abstain from any thing that may stain the excellence of an understanding creature: to "live righteously," which respects the state and situation wherein God has disposed men for his glory: it comprehends all the respective duties to others, to whom we are united by the bands of nature, or of civil society, or of spiritual communion: "and to live godly," which includes all the internal and outward duties we owe to God, who is the sovereign of our spirits, whose will must be the rule, and his glory the end of our actions. In short, the law is so formed, that prescinding from the authority of the lawgiver, its holiness and goodness lays an eternal obligation on us to obey it. Now sin is not only by interpretation, a reproach to the wisdom and other perfections of God, but directly and formally a contrariety to his infinite sanctity and purity; for it consists in a not doing what the law commands, or doing what it forbids. It is therefore said, "that the carnal mind is enmity against God:" Rom. 11. an active, immediate and irreconcileable contrariety to his holy nature and will: from hence there is a reciprocal hatred between God and sinners: "God is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity," Rom. 1. without an infinite displicence, the effects of which will fall upon sinners; and though it is an impiety hardly conceivable, yet the scripture tells us, that "they are haters of God." It is true, God by the transcendent excellence of his nature is incapable of suffering any evil, and there are few in the present state arrived to such malice, as to declare open enmity and war against God. In the damned this hatred is explicit and direct, the fever is heightened to a frenzy,

the blessed God is the object of their curses and eternal aversation: if their rage could extend to him, and their power were equal to their desires, they would dethrone the Most High. And the seeds of this are in the breasts of sinners here. As the fearful expectation of irresistible and fiery vengeance increases, their aversation increases. They endeavour to raze out the inscription of God in their souls, and to extinguish the thoughts and sense of their inspector and judge. They wish he were not all-seeing and almighty, but blind and impotent, incapable to vindicate the honour of his despised Deity. "The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God." The heart is the fountain of desires, and actions interpret the thoughts and affections, from whence the inference is direct and conclusive, that habitual sinners, "who live without God in the world," have secret desires; there was no sovereign being, to observe and require an account of all their actions. The radical cause of this hatred is from the opposition of the sinful polluted wills of men, to the holiness of God; for that attribute excites his justice, and power, and wrath, to punish sinners. Therefore the apostle saith, "they are enemies to God in their minds through wicked works." The naked representing of this impiety, that a reasonable creature should hate the blessed Creator for his most divine perfections, cannot but strike with horror. O the sinfulness of sin!

4. Sin is the contempt and abuse of his excellent goodness. This argument is as vast as God's innumerable mercies, whereby he allures and obliges us to obedience: I shall restrain my discourse of it, to three things wherein the divine goodness is very conspicuous, and most ungratefully despised by sinners.

1st. His creating goodness. It is clear, without the least shadow of doubt, that nothing can give the first being to itself; for this were to be before it was, which is a direct contradiction; and it is evident that God is the sole author of our beings. Our parents afforded the gross matter of our compounded nature, but the variety and union, the beauty and usefulness of the several parts, which is so wonderful, that the body is composed of as many miracles as members, was the design of his wisdom, and the work of his hands. The lively idea and perfect exemplar of that regular fabric, was modelled in the divine mind. This affected the psalmist with admiration: "I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works, and that my soul

knows right well. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect, and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them." Psal. 139. 14, 15, 16. And Job observes, "Thy hands have made me and fashioned me round about." Job. 10. 8. The soul, or principal part, is of a celestial original, inspired from "the Father of spirits." The faculties of understanding and election, are the indelible characters of our dignity above the brutes, and make us capable to please, and glorify, and enjoy him. This first and fundamental benefit, upon which all other favours and benefits are the superstructure, was the effect from an eternal cause, his most free decree, that ordained our birth in the spaces of time. The fountain was his pure goodness; there was no necessity determining his will, he did not want external declarative glory, being infinitely happy in himself, and there could be no superior power to constrain him. And that which renders our Maker's goodness more free and obliging, is the consideration he might have created millions of men, and left us in our native nothing, and, as I may so speak, lost and buried in perpetual darkness. Now, what was God's end in making us? Certainly it was becoming his infinite understanding, that is, to communicate of his own divine fulness, and to be actively glorified by intelligent creatures. Accordingly it is solemn acknowledgment of the representative church. "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they were created." Rev. 4. 11. Who is so void of rational sentiments, as not to acknowledge it is our indispensable duty, "Our reasonable service, to offer up ourselves an entire living sacrifice to his glory?" What is more natural, according to the laws of uncorrupt nature, (I might say, and of corrupt nature, for the heathens practised it) than that love should correspond with love; as the one descends in benefits, the other should ascend in thankfulness. As a polished looking-glass of steel, strongly reverberates the beams of the sun shining upon it, without losing a spark of light, thus the understanding soul should reflect the affection of love upon our blessed Maker, in reverence, and praise, and thankfulness. Now sin breaks all those sacred bands of grace and gratitude, that engage us to love and obey God. He is the just Lord of all our faculties intellectual and sensitive, and the sinner employs them

as weapons of unrighteousness against him. He preserves us by his powerful gracious providence, which is a renewed creation every moment, and the goodness he uses to us, the sinner abuses against him. This is the most unworthy, shameful and monstrous ingratitude. This makes forgetful and unthankful men, more brutish than the dull ox, and stupid ass, who serve those that feed them; nay, sinks them below the insensible part of the creation, that invariably observes the law and order prescribed by the Creator. Astonishing degeneracy! "Hear O heavens, give ear, O earth! I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me," was the complaint of God himself. The considerate review of this, will melt us into tears of confusion.

2dly. It was the invaluable goodness of God to give his law to man, for his rule, both in respect of the matter of the law, and his end in giving it.

1. The matter of the law, this, as is forecited from the apostle, "is holy, just, and good. It contains all things that are honest, and just, and pure, and lovely, and of good report, whatsoever are virtuous and praise-worthy." In obedience to it the innocence and perfection of the reasonable creature consists. This I do but glance upon, having been considered before.

2. The end of giving the law. God was pleased upon man's creation, by an illustrious revelation to show him his duty, to "write his law in his heart," that he might not take one step out of the circle of its precepts, and immediately sin and perish. His gracious design was to keep man in his love; that from the obedience of the reasonable creature, the divine goodness might take its rise to reward him. This unfeigned and excellent goodness, the sinner outrageously despises: for what greater contempt can be expressed against a written law, than the tearing it in pieces, and trampling it under foot? And this constructively the sinner does to the law of God, which contempt extends to the gracious giver of it. "Thus the commandment that was ordained unto life, by sin was found unto death." Rom. 7. 10.

3. Sin is an extreme vilifying of God's goodness, in preferring carnal pleasures to his favour, and communion with him, wherein the life, the felicity, the heaven of the reasonable creature consists. God is infinite in all possible perfections, all-sufficient to make us completely and eternally happy: he disdains to have

any competitor, and requires to be supreme in our esteem and affections: the reason of this is so evident by divine and natural light, that it is needless to spend many words about it. It is an observation of St. Austin, * 'That it was a rule amongst the heathens, that a wise man should worship all their deities.' The Romans were so insatiable in idolatry, that they sent to foreign countries to bring the gods of several nations: an unpolished stone, a tame serpent, that were reputed deities, they received with great solemnity and reverence. But the true God had no temple, no worship in Rome, where there was a Pantheon dedicated to the honour of all the false gods. The reason he gives of it is, that the true God, who alone has divine excellencies, and divine empire, will be worshipped alone, and strictly forbids the assumption of any into his throne. To adore any besides him is infinitely debasing, and provoking to his dread majesty. Now sin in its nature is a conversion from God to the creature; and whatever the temptation be, in yielding to it, there is signified, that we choose something before his favour. Sin is founded *in bono jucundo*, something that is delectable to the carnal nature: it is the universal character of carnal men, "They are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God." To some, riches are the most alluring object. The young man in the gospel, when our Saviour commanded "him to give his estate to the poor, and he should have treasure in heaven, went away sorrowful," as if he had been offered to his loss. To others, the pleasures that in strict propriety are sensual, are most charming. Love is the weight of the soul that turns it, not like a dead weight of the scales, but with election freely to its object: in the carnal balance the present things of the world are of conspicuous moment, and outweigh spiritual and eternal blessings. Although the favour of God be eminently all that can be desired, under the notion of riches, or honour, or pleasure, and every atom of our affection is due to him; yet carnal men think it a cheap purchase to obtain the good things of this world, by sinful means, with the loss of his favour. This their actions declare. Prodigious folly! as if a few sparks struck out of a flint, that can neither afford light or warmth, were more desirable than the sun

* Omnes deos colendos esse sapienti. Cur ergo a numero cæterorum ille rejectus est? nihil restat ut dicant, hujus dei sacra recipere noluerint, nisi quia solum se coli voluerit. *Aug. de Consens. Evang. c.* 17.

in its brightness. And how contumelious and provoking it is to God, he declares in the most moving expressions: "Be astonished, O ye heavens at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the Lord. For my people hath committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out broken cisterns that can hold no water." Jer. 2. 12, 13. This immediately was charged upon the Jews, who set up idols of jealousy, and adored them, rather than the glorious Jehovah: and in proportion it is true of all sinners; for every vicious affection prefers some vain object before his love, and the enjoyment of his glorious presence, that is the reward of obedience.

(5.) The sinner disparages the impartial justice of God. In the divine law there is a connexion between sin and punishment; the evil of doing and the evil of suffering. This is not a mere arbitrary constitution, but founded on the inseparable desert of sin, and the rectitude of God's nature, which unchangeably loves holiness, and hates sin. Although the threatening does not lay a strict necessity upon the Lawgiver always to inflict the punishment; yet God having declared his equal laws as the rule of our duty, and of his judgment, if they should be usually without effect upon offenders, the bands of government would be dissolved, and consequently the honour of his justice stained both with respect to his nature and office: for as an essential attribute it is the correspondence of his will and actions with his moral perfections; and as sovereign ruler, he is to preserve equity and order in his kingdom. Now those who voluntarily break his law, presume upon impunity. The first rebellious sin was committed upon this presumption: God threatened, "If you eat the forbidden fruit, you shall die: the serpent says, eat, and you shall not die;" and assenting to the temptation, Adam fell to disobedience. And ever since men are fearless to sin upon the same motive. God chargeth the wicked, "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thyself;" Psal. 50. not concerned to punish the violation of his sacred laws. The sinner commits the divine attributes to fight against one another, presuming that mercy will disarm justice, and stop its terrible effects upon impenitent obstinate sinners: from hence they become bold and hardened in the continuance of their sins. "There is a root that beareth gall and wormwood:" Deut. 29. 17, 19, 20. and when

the curse of the law is declared and denounced against sin, "the wicked blesseth himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of my heart, to add drunkenness to thirst." This casts such a foul blemish upon the justice of God, that he threatens the severest vengeance for it. "The Lord will not spare him, but the anger of the Lord and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses written in this book shall be upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven. Consider this ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver." Psal. 50.

6. The sinner implicitly denies God's omniscience. There is such a turpitude adhering to sin, that it cannot endure the light of the sun, or the light of conscience, but seeks to be concealed under a mask of virtue, or a vail of darkness. There are very few on this side hell, so transformed into the likeness of the devil, as to be impenetrable by shame. What is said of the adulterer and thief, sinners of greater guilt, and deeper dye, is true in proportion of every sinner: "If a man sees them, they are in the terrors of the shadow of death." Job. Now from whence is it that many, who if they were surprised in the actings of their sins by a child or a stranger, would blush and tremble, yet although the holy God sees all their sins in order to judge them, and will judge in order to punish them, are secure without any fearful or shameful apprehensions of his presence? Did they steadfastly believe that their foul villanies were open to his piercing, pure and severe eye, they must be struck with terrors, and covered with confusion. "Will he force the queen before my face?" Was the speech of the king inflamed with wrath, and the prologue of death against the fallen favourite. Would men dare to affront God's authority, and outrageously break his laws before his face, if they duly considered his omnipresence and observance of them? it were impossible. And infidelity is the radical cause of their inconsideration. It was a false imputation against Job, but justly applied to the wicked, "Thou sayest, how does God know? can he judge through the dark cloud? Thick clouds are a covering to him, that he sees not." Job 22. 13, 14. And such are introduced by the psalmist declaring their inward sentiments: "The Lord shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard it."

Lastly. The sinner slights the power of God. This attribute renders God a dreadful Judge. He has a right to punish, and power to revenge every transgression of his law. His judicial power is supreme, his executive is irresistible. He can with one stroke dispatch the body to the grave, and the soul to hell, and make men as miserable as they are sinful. Yet sinners as boldly provoke him, as if there were no danger. We read of the infatuated Syrians, that they thought that God, the protector of Israel, had only power on the hills, and not in the vallies, and renewed the war to their destruction. Thus sinners enter into the lists with God, and range an army of lusts against the armies of heaven, and blindly bold, run upon their own destruction. They neither believe his all-seeing eye, nor all-mighty hand. They change the glory of the living God into a dead idol, that has eyes and sees not, and hands and handles not; and accordingly his threatenings make no impression upon them.

Thus I have presented a true view of the evil of sin considered in itself: but as Job saith of God, "How little a portion of him is known?" may be said of the evil of sin, how little of it is known? For in proportion as our apprehensions are defective and below the greatness of God, so are they of the evil of sin, that contradicts his sovereign will, and dishonours his excellent perfections.

SERMON III.

GEN. XXXIX. 9.

How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?

ii. I Shall proceed to consider the evil of sin relatively to us, and prove it to be most pernicious and destructive. If we compare it with temporal evils, it preponderates all that men are liable to in the present world. Diseases in our bodies, disasters in our estates, disgrace in our reputation, are in just esteem far less evil than the evil of sin: for that corrupts and destroys our more excellent and immortal part. The vile body is of no account in comparison of the precious soul. Therefore the apostle enforces his exhortation, "dearly beloved brethren, abstain from fleshly lusts, that war against the soul." The issue of this war is infinitely more woful, than of the most cruel against our bodies and goods, our liberties and lives: for our estates and freedom, if lost, may be recovered; if the present life be lost for the cause of God, it shall be restored in greater lustre and perfection; but if the soul be lost, it is lost for ever.

All temporal evils are consistent with the love of God: Job on the dunghill, roughcast with ulcers, was most precious in God's sight: Lazarus in the lowest poverty, and wasted with loathsome sores, was dear to his affections; a guard of angels was sent to convoy his departing soul to the divine presence.

"But sin separates between God and us," who is the fountain of felicity, and the centre of rest to the soul.

Other evils God, who is our wise and compassionate father and physician, makes use of, as medicinal preparations for the cure of sin: and certainly the disease which would be the death of the soul, is worse than the remedy, though never so bitter and afflicting to sense.

Sin is an evil of that malignity, that the least degree of it is fatal. If it be conceived in the soul, though not actually finished, it is deadly. One sin corrupted in an instant angelical excellencies, and turned the glorious spirits of heaven into devils. It is poison so strong, that the first taste of it shed a deadly taint and malignity into the veins of all mankind.

Sin is such an exceeding evil, that it is the severest punishment divine justice inflicts on sinners on this side hell. The giving "men over to the power of their lusts," is the most fearful judgment, not only with respect to the cause, God's unrelenting and unquenchable anger, and the issue, everlasting destruction, but in the quality of the judgment. Nay, did sin appear as odious in our eyes as it does in God's, we should account it the worst part of hell itself, the pollutions of the damned to be an evil exceeding the torments superadded to them.

Sin is pregnant with all kinds of evils, the seeds of it are big with judgments. The evils that are obvious to sense, or that are spiritual and inward, temporal and eternal evils, all proceed from sin, often as the natural cause, and always as the meritorious. And many times the same punishment is produced by the efficiency of sin, as well as inflicted for its guilt. Thus uncleanness, without the miraculous waters of jealousy, rots the body, and the pleasure of sin is revenged by a loathsome consuming disease, the natural consequence of it. Thus intemperance and luxury shorten the lives of men, and accelerate damnation. Fierce desires, and wild rage are fuel for the everlasting fire in hell. The same evils considered physically, are from the efficiency of sin; considered legally, are from the guilt of sin, and the justice of God.

This being a point of great usefulness, that I may be more instructive, I will consider the evils that are consequential to sin, under these two heads.

First. Such as proceed immediately from it by emanation.

Secondly. Those evils, and all other as the effects of God's justice and sentence.

First. The evils that proceed immediately by emanation from it: and though some of them are not resented with feeling apprehensions by sinners, yet they are of a fearful nature. Sin has deprived man of the purity, nobility, and peace of his innocent state.

1. It has stained and tainted him with an universal, intimate and permanent pollution. Man in his first creation was holy and righteous: a beam of beauty derived from heaven was shed upon his soul, in comparison of which, sensitive beauty is but as the clearness of glass, to the lustre of a diamond. His understanding "was light in the Lord," his will and affections were regular and pure, the divine image was impressed upon all his faculties, that attracted the love and complacency of God himself. Sin has blotted out all his amiable excellencies, and superinduced the most foul deformity, the original of which was fetched from hell. Sinners are the natural children of satan, of a near resemblance to him. The scripture borrows comparisons to represent the defiling quality of sin, from pollutions that are most loathsome to our senses: from "pestilential ulcers, putrefying sores, filthy vomit, and defiling mire." This pollution is universal through the whole man, spirit, soul and body. It darkens the mind, our supreme faculty, with a cloud of corruption; it depraves the will, and vitiates the affections. It is a pollution so deep and permanent, that the deluge that swept away a world of sinners, did not wash away their sins: and the fire at the last day, that shall devour the dross of the visible world, and renew the heavens and the earth, shall not purge away the sins of the guilty inhabitants. This pollution hath so defiled and disfigured man, who was a fair and lovely type, wherein the skill and perfections of the Creator were conspicuous, "that it repented God that he made man." As an artificer having formed a surprising piece, either a statue or picture, wherein art almost equalled the life and lustre of nature; if it be torn or broken, throws it from his sight with sorrow, impatient to see it so rudely defaced: thus God is said "to hide his face from sinners," to express his displeasure, as unwilling to behold the dis-

paragement of his master-piece, the excellent product of his wisdom and power.

2. Sin has degraded man from his native state and dignity. Man by his extraction and descent was "the son of God, a little lower than the angels," consecrated and crowned, as a priest for the service and communion with his glorious Maker, and as king over the world. "But being in honour, he understood not his dignity, his duty and felicity, and became like the beasts that perish." By his rebellion against his Creator, he made a forfeiture of his dominion, and lost the obedience of sensible creatures, and the service of insensible; which I only mention, and shall restrain my consideration, to show how he is become like the beasts, as an effect resulting from his sin. He is divested of his white robe of innocence, and his noblest perfections, reason and religion. Sense and imagination, the leading faculties in brutes, are his rulers: the rational governing powers of man, have lost their superior sway, and the carnal passions rove without reins to forbidden objects. The lower appetites are predominant, which is the most ignominious and cruel servitude wherein human liberty can be entangled and fettered. His understanding and will, that were capable of taking a flight for the discovery and fruition of celestial and eternal things, are debased, and limited to sensual perishing things, and derive vilifying qualities from them. "He is earthly minded;" his aims, contrivances, desires are fastened to the earth: the divine spark within him is covered under ashes. "He is carnally minded," always studying and making "provisions for the flesh." This is a viler debasement, than if the counsellors of state were employed in the sordid offices of the kitchen or stable. Nay, it is a diminution below the rank of beasts, for by nature they are incapable of directing their eyes and desires towards heaven; but man is brutish by his voluntary sin. To see the head of a rapacious wolf, or fierce tiger, or lustful horse joined to the body of a man, how monstrous would it appear? But it is more unnatural and ignominious, for men, in whom reason and religion should govern, to resemble them in the brutish appetites of lust and rage; for there is a nearer affinity between the body of a man and of a beast, that agree in the common sensible nature, than between the immortal spirit of a

man, and the beasts that perish. In short, sin has enslaved men to satan an infernal fiend: "they are taken captives by him at his pleasure:" and, which is the lowest degradation, "they are the servants of corruption."

3. Sin has broke the sweet peace and blessed concord in the soul, the felicity of our innocent state. Peace is the tranquillity that results from order and unity. In man there was a regular harmony of all his faculties; the affections were consonant with his will, his will with his understanding, and his understanding with the law of God. This was the inward state of his soul in his creation; for having a derived being, it was natural and necessary, that he should be appointed to his end, and receive his rule for the obtaining it, from the understanding and will of his Maker. Now whilst there was a correspondence in his faculties, and their operations with his rule and end, the will of God, and the glory of God, the result of it, as well as the reward of it, was spiritual peace with God, internal peace with himself, external peace with others. Now sin has dissolved this unity, violated this sacred order: and from hence,

(1.) Peace with God, that consisted in his favour and friendship to us, and our filial dependance upon him, which is the spring of full and satisfying joy, is broke. God appears a fearful enemy against the sinners; the penal effects of his wrath, I shall speak of distinctly under the second general: and that divine calm in the conscience, that peace joined with the purest pleasure, that was the reflex of God's favour on the soul, is changed into anxious apprehensions of his just power to punish us. Guilt generates fear, and fear hatred, and both cause a woful flight from God.

(2.) Internal peace is broke by sin. Whilst the passions were subordinate to the empire of reason, and in accord among themselves, there was a perfect peace; but sin has raised an intestine war in man's breast. "The law of the members rebels against the law of the mind:" for there is no man so prodigiously wicked, and spoiled of his primitive endowments, * but still there remain some principles of morality in the mind, so that his conscience discovers and condemns the vices he allows and practises, which makes the sinner uneasy to himself, and

* Prima hæc est ultio, quod se judice nemo nocens absolvit.

mixes vinegar with his wine. Besides, since the passions are disbanded, into what confusion is man fallen? How various, how violent are they, and often repugnant to one another? How often do we change their habits and scenes in a day? Sometimes we are vainly merry, and then as vainly sad; sometimes desirous, and then averse; and with respect to ourselves, sometimes pleased, sometimes vexed, sometimes amiable, and sometimes odious; we are more mutable than the planet that is the emblem of inconstancy. How often do clouds of melancholy darken the bright serenity of the spirit, and cast a dreadful gloom over it? How often do storms of passion disturb its tranquillity? The breast of man, that was the temple of peace, is become a den of dragons; every exorbitant affection tears and torments him. It is true, this is also a penal effect from divine justice: "there is no peace saith my God to the wicked:" with which that saying of St. Austin is consonant, *jussit Domine, & sic est, omnis inordinatus affectus est sibi pœna.*

(3.) Sin has broke our agreement with one another. When there was a regular consent between the superior and lower faculties in all men, they were in unity among themselves, for they were perfectly alike. But the tumultuous and tyrannical passions have engaged them in mortal enmity. It is the account St. James gives, "From whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts, that war in your members?" Sin kindles and blows the fire of discord, in families, cities, kingdoms: sin is the fury that brings a smoking firebrand from hell, and sets the world into combustion. Ambition, avarice, the greedy desires of rule and revenge, have made the world a stage of not feigned, but the most bloody tragedies. In this men are not like, but worse than the beasts: for the fiercest beasts of Africa or Hyrcania, have a respect for their own likeness: though they devour others, yet they spare those of their own kind: but men are so degenerate as to be most cruel against their brethren. These are some of the evils that proceed from sin as their natural cause. And from hence it is evident, that sin makes men miserable, were there no hell of torment to receive them in the next state.

Secondly. I will consider the evils consequent to sin, as the penal effects of the sentence against sin; of divine justice that

decrees it, and divine power that inflicts it: and in these the sinner is often an active instrument of his own misery.

1. The fall of the angels is the first and most terrible punishment of sin. "God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, reserved in chains of darkness to judgment." How are they fallen? from what height of glory and felicity into bottomless perdition? How are they continually racked and tormented with the remembrance of their lost happiness? If a thousand of the prime nobility of a nation were executed in a day, by the sentence of a righteous king, we should conclude their crimes to be atrocious: innumerable angels, dignified with the titles of "dominions and principalities," were expelled from heaven, their native seat, and the sanctuary of life, and are dead to all joyful operations of the intellectual nature, and only alive to everlasting pain.

One sin of pride or envy, brought this terrible vengeance; from whence we may infer, how provoking sin is to the holy God. We read of king Uzziah, that upon his presumption to offer incense, he was struck with a leprosy, and the priests thrust him out, and himself hasted to go out of the temple: a representation of the punishment of the angels: by presumption they were struck with a leprosy, and justly expelled from the celestial temple; and not being able to sustain the terrors of the divine majesty, they fled from his presence. It is said, "God cast them down, and they left their own habitation."

2. Consider the penal effects of sin with respect to man. They are comprehended in the sentence of death, the first and second death threatened to deter Adam from transgressing the law.

In the first creation man while innocent was immortal: for although his body was compounded of jarring elements, that had a natural tendency to dissolution, yet the soul was endowed with such virtue, as to embalm the body alive, and to preserve it from the least degree of putrefaction. But when man by his voluntary sin was separated from the Fountain of Life, the soul lost its derivative life from God, and the active life infused by its union into the body. It cannot preserve the natural life beyond its limited term. A righteous retaliation. Thus the apostle tells us, "sin came into the world, and death by sin." Even infants who never committed sin, die, having been conceived in sin.

And death brought in its retinue evils so numerous and various, that their kinds are more than words to name and distinguish them. "Man that is born of a woman, is of few days, and full of trouble:" at his birth he enters into a labyrinth of thorns, this miserable world, and his life is a continual turning in it; he cannot escape being sometimes pricked and torn; and at going out of it, his soul is rent from the embraces of the body. It is as possible to tell the number of the waves in a tempestuous sea, as to recount all the tormenting passions of the soul, all the diseases of the body, which far exceed in number all the unhappy parts wherein they are seated. What an afflicting object would it be, to hear all the mournful lamentations, all the piercing complaints, all the deep groans from the miserable in this present state? What a prospect of terror, to see death in its various shapes, by famine, by fire, by sword, and by wasting or painful diseases, triumphant over all mankind? What a sight of woe, to have all the graves and charnel-houses opened, and so many loathsome carcasses, or heaps of dry naked bones, the trophies of death, exposed to view? Such are the afflicting and the destructive effects of sin. "For wickedness burns as a fire: it devours the briars and thorns."

Besides other miseries in this life, sometimes the terrors of an accusing conscience seize upon men, which of all evils are most heavy and overwhelming. Solomon who understood the frame of human nature, tells us, "The spirit of a man can bear his infirmity:" that is, the mind fortified by principles of moral counsel and constancy, can endure the assault of external evils: "but a wounded spirit who can bear?" This is most insupportable when the sting and remorse of the mind is from the sense of guilt: for then God appears an enemy righteous and severe; and who can encounter with offended omnipotence? Such is the sharpness of his sword, and the weight of his hand, that every stroke is deadly inward. Satan the cruel enemy of souls, exasperates the wound. He discovers and charges sin upon the conscience, with all its killing aggravations, and conceals the divine mercy, the only lenitive and healing balm to the wounded spirit. What visions of horror, what spectacles of fear, what scenes of sorrow are presented to the distracted mind by the prince of darkness? And which heightens the misery, man is a worse enemy to himself than satan: he falls upon his own sword,

and destroys himself. Whatever he sees or hears, afflicts him; whatever he thinks, torments him. The guilty conscience "turns the sun into darkness, and the moon into blood:" the precious promises of the gospel, that assure favour and pardon to returning and relenting sinners, are turned into arguments of despair, by reflecting upon the abuse and provocation of mercy, and that the advocate in God's bosom is become the accuser. Doleful state! beyond the conception of all, but those who are plunged into it. How often do they run to the grave for sanctuary, and seek for death as a deliverance?

Yet all these anxieties and terrors are but the beginning of sorrows: for the full and terrible recompences of sin shall follow the eternal judgment pronounced against the wicked at the last day. It is true, the sentence of the law is passed against the sinner in this present state, and temporal evils are the effects of it; but that sentence is revocable: at death the sentence is ratified by the Judge upon every impenitent sinner; it is decisive of his state, and involves him under punishment for ever: but the full execution of judgment shall not be till the public general sentence pronounced by the everlasting Judge, before the whole world. It exceeds the compass of created thoughts to understand fully the direful effects of sin in the eternal state? "For who knows the power of God's wrath?" The scripture represents the punishment in expressions, that may instruct the mind, and terrify the imagination: that may work upon the principles of reason and sense, by which men are naturally and strongly moved.

(1.) Sinners shall be excluded from communion with the blessed God in heaven, "in whose presence is fulness of joy, and at whose right hand are pleasures for evermore. In the clear and transforming vision of his glory, and the intimate and indissolvable union with him by love, consist the perfection and satisfaction of the immortal soul. The felicity resulting from it, is so entire and eternal, as God is great and true, who has so often promised it to his saints. Now sin separates lost souls for ever from the reviving presence of God. Who can declare the extent and degrees of that evil? for an evil rises in proportion to the good of which it deprives us: it must therefore follow, that celestial blessedness being transcendent, the exclusion from it is proportionably evil: and as the felicity of the saints results both

from the direct possession of heaven, and from comparison with the contrary state: so the misery of the damned arises, both from the thoughts of lost happiness, and from the lasting pain that torments them.

But it may be replied, if this be the utmost evil that is consequent to sin, the threatening of it is not likely to deter but few from pleasing their corrupt appetites: for carnal men have such gross apprehensions, and vitiated affections, that they are careless of spiritual glory and joy. "They cannot taste and see how good the Lord is:" nay, the divine presence would be a torment to them: for as light is the most pleasant quality in the world to the sound eye, so it is very afflicting and painful to the eye when corrupted by a suffusion of humours.

To this a clear answer may be given: in the next state where the wicked shall for ever be without those sensual objects which here deceive and delight them, their apprehensions will be changed; they shall understand what a happiness the fruition of the blessed God is, and what a misery to be incapable of enjoying him, and expelled from the celestial paradise. Our Saviour tells the infidel jews, "there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves shut out." Luke 15. 28. How will they pine with envy at the sight of that triumphant felicity of which they shall never be partakers? "Depart from me," will be as terrible a part of the judgment, "as eternal fire."

(2.) God's justice is not satisfied in depriving them of heaven, but inflicts the most heavy punishment upon sense and conscience in the damned: for as the soul and body in their state of union in this life, were both guilty, the one as the guide, the other as the instrument of sin; so it is equal, when re-united, they should feel the penal effects of it. The scripture represents both to our capacity, "by the worm that never dies, and the fire that shall never be quenched: and by the destroying of body and soul in hell-fire." Sinners shall then be tormented, wherein they were most delighted: they shall be invested with those objects, that will cause the most dolorous perceptions in their sensitive faculties. "The lake of fire and brimstone, the blackness of darkness, are words of a terrible signification, and intended to awaken sinners to fly "from the wrath to come." But no

words can fully reveal the terrible ingredients of their misery: the punishment will be in proportion to the glory of God's majesty that is dishonoured and provoked by sin, and extent of his power. And as the soul was the principle, and the body but an accessary in the works of sin; so its capacious faculties will be far more tormented, than the more limited faculties of the outward senses. The fiery attributes of God shall be transmitted through the glass of conscience, and concentred upon damned spirits: the fire without them is not so tormenting as this fire within them. How will the tormenting passions be inflamed? What rancour, reluctance and rage against the power above that sentenced them to hell? What impatience and indignation against themselves for their wilful sins, the just cause of it? How will they curse their creation, and wish their utter extinction, as the final remedy of their misery? But all their ardent wishes are in vain: for the guilt of sin will never be expiated, nor God so far reconciled as to annihilate them. As long as there are justice in heaven, and fire in hell, as long as God and eternity shall continue, they must suffer these torments, which the strength and patience of an angel cannot bear one hour. From hence we may infer, what an inconceivable evil there is in sin, and how hateful it is to the Most High, when God "who is love, who is styled the Father of mercies," has prepared and does inflict such plagues for ever for the transgression of his holy laws: and such is the equity of his judgment, that he never punishes offenders above their desert.

I shall now apply this doctrine, by reflecting the light of it upon our minds and hearts.

1. This discovers how perverse and depraved the minds and wills of men are, "to choose sin rather than affliction," and break the divine law for the obtaining temporal things. If one with an attentive eye regards the generality of mankind, what dominion present and sensible things have over them, how securely and habitually they sin in prosecution of their carnal aims, as if the soul should not survive the body, as if there were no tribunal above to examine, no judge to sentence and punish sinners; if he has not marble bowels, it will excite his compassion or indignation. What comparison is there between the good things of this world, and of the next in degrees or duration? Airy honour, sensual pleasures, and worldly riches, are but the

thin appearances of happiness, shadows in masquerade, that cannot afford solid content to an immortal spirit: the blessedness of heaven replenishes with everlasting satisfaction. What proportion is there between the "light and momentary afflictions here," and a vast eternity "filled with indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, and desperate sorrow?" What stupid beast, what monster of a man, would prefer a superficial transient delight, the pleasure of a short dream, before ever satisfying joys? Or to avoid a slight evil, venture upon destruction? Yet this is the true case of sinners: if they can obtain the world with the loss of heaven, they count it a valuable purchase; if they can compound so, as to escape temporal troubles, though involved under guilt that brings extreme and eternal misery, they think it a saving bargain. Amazing folly! Either they believe or do not, the recompences in the future state: if they do not, how unaccountable is their impiety? If they do, it is more prodigious they do not "feel the powers of the world to come," so as to regulate their lives, and control the strongest temptations to sin against God. A wicked believer is more guilty than a wicked infidel. How could we conceive it possible, were it not visible in their actions, that men who have judicative faculties to compare and distinguish things, and accordingly be moved with desires or fears, should with ardent affections pursue despicable vanities, and neglect substantial happiness, and be fearful of the shadows of dangers, and intrepid in the midst of the truest dangers! He is a desperate gamester that will venture a crown at a throw, against some petty advantage: yet this is really done by sinners who hazard the loss of heaven for this world: they hang by slender strings, a little breath that expires every moment, over bottomless perdition, and are insensible, without any palpitation of heart, any sign of fear.

How strong is the delusion and concupiscence of the carnally-minded? The lusts of the flesh bribe and corrupt their understandings, or divert them from serious consideration of their ways, and the issues of them. From hence it is they are presently entangled and vanquished by sensual temptations; they are cozened by the colours of good and evil, and satan easily accomplishes his most pernicious and envious design, to make men miserable as himself. How just is the reproach of wisdom, "how long ye simple ones will ye love simplicity, and fools hate

knowledge?" The light of reason and revelation shines upon them, they have not the excuse of ignorance, but the righteous and heavy "condemnation of those who love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil." It is no mean degree of guilt to extenuate sin, and make an apology for sinners. The wisest of men tells us, "fools make a mock of sin:" they count it a fond niceness, a silly preciseness to be fearful of offending God. They boast of their deceitful arts and insinuations, whereby they represent sin as a light matter, to corrupt others. But it is infinitely better to be defective in the subtilty of the serpent, than in the innocence of the dove. A mere natural, who is only capable of sensitive actions, and is distinguished from a brute by his shape, is not such a forlorn sot, as the sinful fool. What the prophet Jeremy speaks of one who gets riches unjustly, that he shall leave them, and "in the end die a fool" will be verified of the wilful obtsinate sinner: in the end he shall by the terrible conviction of his own mind, be found guilty of the most woful folly: and how many have acknowledged in their last hours, when usually men speak with the most feeling and least affectation, how have they in words of the psalmist arraigned themselves, "so foolish have we been, and like beasts before thee?"

2. From hence we may be instructed of the wonderful patience of God, who bears with a world of sinners, that are obnoxious to his justice, and under his power every day. If we consider the number and aggravations of men's sins, how many have outtold the hairs of their heads in actual transgressions; how mighty and manifest their sins are, that the Deity and providence are questioned for the suspending of vengeance? And yet that God notwithstanding all their enormous injuries, and violent provocations, is patient towards sinners, it cannot but fill us with admiration. His mercy, like the cheerful light of the sun, visits us every morning with its benign influences; his justice, like thunder, rarely strikes the wicked. He affords not only the supports of life, but many comforts and refreshments to the unthankful and rebellious.

It is not from any defect in his power that they are not consumed, but from the abundance of his mercy. He made the world without any strain of his power, and can as easily destroy it: he has an innumerable company of angels attending his commands; and every angel is an army in strength: one of them

destroyed an hundred and fourscore and five thousand in a night. He can use the most despicable and weakest creatures, frogs, and lice, and flies, as instruments of vengeance to subdue the proudest Pharaoh, the most obstinate rebels.—He sees sin wherever it is, and hates it wherever he sees it; yet his patience endures their crying sins, and his long-suffering expects their repentance. "The Lord is not slack, as some men count slackness, but he is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." He spares sinners with such indulgence, in order to their salvation. It is deservedly one of his royal titles, "the God of patience." Our fierce spirits are apt to take fire and revenge for every injury real, or supposed; but the great God, who is infinitely sensible of all the indignities offered to his majesty, "defers his anger, and loads them with his benefits every day." What is more astonishing than "the riches of his goodness," unless it be the perverse abuse of it by sinners, to harden themselves in their impieties? But although his clemency delays the punishment, the sacredness and constancy of his justice will not forget it: "when patience has had its perfect work," justice shall have a solemn triumph in the final destruction of impenitent unreformed sinners.

3. The consideration of the evil of sin, so great in itself, and pernicious to us, heightens our obligations to the divine mercy, in saving us from our sins, and an everlasting hell, the just punishment of them. Our loss was invaluable, our misery extreme, and without infinite mercy, we had been under an irremediable necessity of sinning and suffering for ever. God saw us in this wretched and desperate state, "and his eye affected his heart, in his pity he redeemed" and restored us. This is the clearest testimony of pure goodness: for God did not want external glory, who is infinitely happy in his own perfections: he could, when man revolted from his duty, have created a new world of innocent creatures: for infinite power is not spent nor lessened by finite productions, but his undeserved and undesired mercy appeared in our salvation. The way of accomplishing it, renders mercy more illustrious: for to glorify his justice, and preserve the honour of his holiness unblemished, he laid upon his Son "the iniquity of us all." This was love that passeth all understanding: our Saviour speaks of it with admiration; "God so loved

the world," and hated sin, "that he gave his only begotten Son to die for it; that whosoever believes in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life."

And how dear are our engagements to Jesus Christ? The judge would not release the guilty without a ransom, nor the surety without satisfaction; and the Son of God most compassionately and willingly gave his precious blood to obtain our deliverance. If his perfections were not most amiable and ravishing, yet that he died for us, should infinitely endear him to us. "To those who believe, he is precious:" to those who have felt their undone condition, and that by his merits and mediation, are restored to the favour of God, he is eminently precious. Who can break 'the constraints of such love?' If there be a spark of reason, or a grain of unfeigned faith in us, "We must judge, that if one died for all, then all were dead; and those that live, should live to his glory, who died for their salvation."

Add to this, that in the sufferings of Christ there is the clearest demonstration of the evil of sin, and how hateful it is to God, if we consider the dignity of his person, the greatness of his sufferings, and the innocent recoilings of his human nature from such fearful sufferings. He was the eternal Son of God, the heir of his Father's love and glory, the Lord of angels; he suffered in his body the most ignominious and painful death, being nailed to the cross in the sight of the world: the sufferings of his soul were incomparably more afflicting: for though heavenly meek, he endured the derision and cruel violence of his enemies with a silent patience; yet in the dark eclipse of his Father's countenance, in the desolate state of his soul, the Lamb of God opened his mouth in that mournful complaint, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" His innocent nature did so recoil from those fearful sufferings, that with repeated ardency of affection, he deprecated that bitter cup; "Abba, Father, all things are possible to thee; let this cup pass me:" he addressed to the divine power and love, the attributes that relieve the miserable, yet he drank off the dregs of the cup of God's wrath. Now we may from hence conclude, how great an evil sin is, that could not be expiated by a meaner sacrifice, "than the offering up the soul of Christ" to atone incensed justice; and no lower a price, than the blood of the Son of God, the most invaluable treasure, could ransom men who were devoted to destruction.

4. The consideration of the evil of sin in itself and to us, should excite us with a holy circumspection to keep ourselves from being defiled with it. It is our indispensable duty, our transcendent interest to obey the divine law entirely and constantly. The tempter cannot present any motives, that to a rectified mind are sufficient to induce a consent to sin, and offend God. Let the scales be even, and put into one all the delights of the senses, all the pleasures and honours of the world, which are the elements of carnal felicity, how light are they against the enjoyment of the blessed God in glory? Will the gain of this perishing world, compensate the loss of the soul and salvation for ever? If there were any possible comparison between empty deluding vanities, and celestial happiness, the choice would be more difficult, and the mistake less culpable; but they vanish into nothing in the comparison: so that to commit the least sin that makes us liable to the forfeiture of heaven, for "the pleasures of sin that are but for a season," is madness in that degree, that no words can express. Suppose the tempter inspires his rage into his slaves, and tries to constrain us to sin by persecution; how unreasonable is it to be dismayed at the threatenings of men, "who must die," and who can only touch the body; and to despise the terrors of the Lord," who lives for ever, and can punish for ever? Methinks we should look upon the perverted raging world, as a swarm of angry flies, that may disquiet, but cannot hurt us. Socrates, when unrighteously prosecuted to death, said of his enemies, with a courage becoming the breast of a christian, 'They may kill me, but cannot hurt me.' How should these considerations raise in us an invincible resolution and reluctancy against the tempter, in all his approaches and addresses to us? 'And that we may so resist him, as to cause his flight from us,' let us imitate the excellent saint, whose example is set before us.

(1.) By possessing the soul with a lively and solemn sense of God's presence, who is the inspector and judge of all our actions. Joseph repelled the temptation with this powerful thought, "How shall I sin against God?" 'The fear of the Lord is clean;' it is a watchful sentinel, that resists temptations without, and suppresses corruptions within: it is like the cherubim placed with a flaming sword in paradise, to prevent the re-entry of Adam when guilty and polluted. For this end we must, by fre-

quent and serious considerations, represent the divine being and glory in our minds, that there may be a gracious constitution of soul; this will be our preservative from sin: for although the habitual thoughts of God are not always in act, yet upon a temptation they are presently excited, and appear in the view of conscience, and are effectual to make us reject the tempter with defiance and indignation.

This holy fear is not a mere judicial impression, that restrains from sin, for the dreadful punishment that follows; for that servile affection, though it may stop a temptation, and hinder the eruption of a lust into the gross act, yet it does not renew the nature, and make us holy and heavenly. There may be a respective dislike of sin with a direct affection to it. Besides, a mere servile fear is repugnant to nature, and will be expelled if possible. Therefore, that we "may be in the fear of the Lord all the day long," we must regard him in his endearing attributes, his love, his goodness and compassion, his rewarding mercy; and this will produce a filial fear of reverence and caution, lest we should offend so gracious a God. As the natural life is preserved by grateful food, not by aloes and wormwood, which are useful medicines; so the spiritual life is maintained by the comfortable apprehensions of God, as the rewarder of our fidelity in all our trials.

(2.) Strip sin of its disguises, wash off its flattering colours, that you may see its native ugliness. Joseph's reply to the tempter, "How shall I do this great wickedness?" Illusion and concupiscence are the inducements to sin: when a lust represents the temptation as very alluring, and hinders the reflection of the mind, upon the intrinsic and consequential evil of sin, it is like the putting poison into the glass: but when it has so far corrupted the mind, that sin is esteemed a small evil, poison is thrown into the fountain. If we consider the majesty of the Lawgiver, there is no law small, nor sin small, that is the transgression of it. Yet the most are secure in an evil course, by conceits that their sins are small. It is true, there is a vast difference between sins in their nature and circumstances: there are insensible omissions and accusing acts, but the least is damnable. Besides, the allowance and number of sins reputed small, will involve under intolerable guilt. What is lighter than a grain of sand? you may blow away a hundred with a breath; and what

is heavier than a heap of sand condensed together? It is our wisdom and duty to consider the evil of sin in its essential malignity, which implies no less, than that God was neither wise nor good in making his law, and that he is not just and powerful to vindicate it: and when tempted to any pleasant sin, to consider the due aggravations of it, as Joseph did, which will control the efficacy of the temptation. I shall only add, that when a man has mortified the lusts of the flesh, he has overcome the main part of the infernal army "that wars against the soul." Sensual objects do powerfully and pleasantly insinuate into carnal men, and the affections are very unwillingly restrained from them. To undertake the cure of those, whose disease is their pleasure, is almost a vain attempt: for they do not judge it an evil to be regarded, and will not accept distasteful remedies.

(3.) Fly all tempting occasions of sin. Joseph would not be alone with his mistress. There is no virtue so confirmed, and in that degree of eminence, but if one be frequently engaged in vicious society, it is in danger of being eclipsed and controlled by the opposite vice. If the ermines will associate with the swine, they must lie in the mire: if the sheep with wolves, they must learn to bite and devour: if doves with vultures, they must learn to live on the prey. Our surest guard is to keep at a distance from all engaging snares. He that from carelessness and confidence ventures into temptations, makes himself an easy prey to the tempter.

And let us daily pray for the divine assistance to keep us from the evil of the world; without which all our resolutions will be as ineffectual as ropes of sand, to bind us to our duty.

5. The consideration of the evil of sin is a powerful motive to our solemn and speedy repentance. The remembrance of our original and actual sins, will convince us, that we are born for repentance. There are innumerable silent sins, that are unobserved, and do not alarm the conscience: and although a true saint will neither hide any sin, nor suffer sin to hide itself in his breast, yet the most holy men in the world, have great reason with the psalmist, to say with melting affections, "Who can understand his errors? O cleanse me from my secret sins;" discover them to me by the light of the word, and cover them in the blood of the Redeemer. There are sins of infirmity, and daily incursion, from which none can be perfectly freed in this

mortal state: these should excite our watchfulness, and be lamented with true tears. There are crying sins of a crimson guilt, which are to be confessed with heart-breaking sorrow, confounding shame, and implacable antipathy against them, and to be forsaken for ever. Of these, some are of a deep dye in their nature, and some from the circumstances in committing them; some are of an heinous nature, and more directly and expressly renounce our duty, and more immediately obstruct our communion with God: as a mud-wall intercepts the light of the sun from shining upon us. 2. Some derive a greater guilt from the circumstances in the commission. Such are,

(1.) Sins against knowledge: for according to the ingrediency of the will in sin, the guilt arises. Now when conscience interposes between the carnal heart and the temptation, and represents the evil of sin, and deters from compliance, and yet men will venture to break the divine law, this exceedingly aggravates the offence; for such sins are committed with a fuller consent, and are justly called rebellion against the light. And the clearer the light is, the more it will increase the disconsolate fearful darkness in hell.

(2.) Sins committed against the love as well as the law of God, are exceedingly aggravated. To prevent the benefits we receive from God to his dishonour, to turn them into occasions of sin, which were designed to endear obedience to us; to sin licentiously and securely in hopes of an easy pardon at last, is intensive of our guilt in a high degree. This is to poison the antidote, and make it deadly. There is a sacrifice to reconcile offended justice; but if men obstinately continue in sin, and abuse the grace of the gospel, there is no sacrifice to appease exasperated mercy.

(3.) Sins committed against solemn promises and engagements to forsake them, have a deeper dye: for perfidiousness is joined with this disobedience. This divine law strictly binds us to our duty, antecedently to our consent; but when we promise to obey it, we increase our obligations, and by sinning, break double chains. In short, any habitual allowed sin, induces a heavy guilt; for it argues a deeper root and foundation of sin in the heart, a stronger inclination to it, from whence the repeated acts proceed, which are new provocations to the pure eyes of God. Accordingly in repenting reflections, our sorrow should be

most afflicting, our humiliation deeper, our self-condemnation most severe for those sins which have been most dishonourable to God, and defiling to us. Not that we can make any satisfaction for our sins, though we should fill the air with our sighs, and heaven with our tears; but it becomes us to have our sorrows enlarged in some proportion to our unworthiness. And this mournful disposition prepares us for the grace of God. The law does not allow repentance, but exacts entire obedience: it is the privilege of the gospel, that repenting sinners are assured of forgiveness: without this qualification it is inconsistent with the majesty, purity and justice of God, to extend pardoning mercy to sinners: for they will never value, nor humbly and ardently seek for mercy, till they feel the woful effects of sin in their conscience: only the stung Israelite would look to the brazen serpent. And this is requisite to prevent our relapsing into sin: for the dominion of sin being founded in the love of pleasure, the proper means to extinguish it, is by a bitter repentance: the heart is first broken for sin, and then from it.

To conclude; let us renew our repentance every day: let not the wounds of our spirits putrefy: "let not the sun go down upon God's wrath:" let us always renew the application of Christ's blood that alone can cleanse us from sin.

SERMON IV.

I JOHN v. 2.

By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.

OF all the marks that are useful in the trial of our spiritual state in reference to eternity, there is none affords a more clear and comfortable assurance of God's special and saving mercy, than love to the saints. This has often resolved the doubts, and quieted the fears of afflicted inquiring souls, when other graces have not been so apprehensible in their operations. But there is no mark which the deceitful heart does more securely rest upon, through the mistake of natural human love for that which is spiritual and divine: it is therefore most worthy our serious thoughts, the deceit being so easy and infinitely dangerous, to shew what is the unfeigned genuine love of the brethren, to which salvation is annexed, to confirm the humble sincere christian, and undeceive presuming hypocrites.

The great design of St. John in this epistle, is to excite and inflame in christians the love of God, and of their brethren, the two comprehensive duties, and bright sum of the law, our principal perfections in heaven and earth. These he recommends by the most affectionate and obliging, the most warming, melting

persuasives; the superlative love of God to us, and our communion with the saints in nature and grace.

In the former verse the apostle argues from the reality of the effect, as an evidence of the cause. "Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ," that is, the Saviour of the world, foretold by the prophets, and expresses the truth of that faith in a suitable conversation, "is born of God; and every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him." Grace is not less powerful in producing tender reciprocal affections between the offspring of the same heavenly Father, than the subordinate endearments of nature. The pretence is vain of love to God, without loving his regenerate children. And in the text he argues from the knowledge of the cause, to the discovering of the sincerity of the effect: "by this we know that we love the children of God," with a holy affection, "if we love God, and keep his commandments."

There is but one difficulty to be removed, that the force of the apostle's reasoning may appear; it is this, a medium to prove a thing must be a clearer evidence than what is concluded by it: now though a demonstration from the cause be more noble and scientifical, yet that which is drawn from the effect, is more near to sense, and more discernible. And this is verified in the instance before us; for the love of God, who is absolutely spiritual in his being and excellencies, doth not with that sensible fervour affect and passionately transport us, as love to his children, with whom we visibly converse, and who are receptive of the most sensible testimonies of our affection. Accordingly the apostle argues, "he that loves not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" As the motives to love our brethren, from our conjunction in nature, and familiar conversation, are more capable to allure our affections, and more sensibly strike the heart than the invisible Deity, who is infinitely above us; by the same reason we may more easily judge of the truth of our love to them, than of our love to God. To this the answer is clear; the apostle doth not speak of the love of God, as a still, silent, contemplative affection, confined to the superior faculty of the soul, but as a burning, shining affection (like fire *) active and declarative of itself

* Lumine qui semper proditur ipsi suo.

in those effects that necessarily flow from it, that is voluntary obedience to his commands; and thus it becomes manifest to the renewed conscience, and is a most convincing proof of the sincerity of our love to the saints.

The text being cleared, affords this doctrine:

Doct. The sincerity of our love to the children of God, is certainly discovered by our love to God, and obedience to his commands.

For the illustration and proof of the point, I will briefly show,

I. Who are described by this title, The children of God.

II. What is included in our love to them.

III. What the love of God is, and the obedience that flows from it.

IV. How from love to God, and willing obedience to his commands, we may convincingly know the sincerity of our love to his children.

To explain the first, we must consider that this title, The children of God, is given upon several accounts.

First. By creation the angels are called the sons of God, and men his offspring.

The reason of the title is,

1. The manner of their production by his immediate power. Thus he is styled, "the Father of spirits," in distinction from the fathers of the flesh. For though the conception and forming of the body be the work of his secret providence, yet it is by the hand of nature, the parents concurring as the second causes of it: but the production of the soul is to be entirely ascribed to his power, without the intervention of any creature.

2. In their spiritual immortal nature, and the intellectual operations flowing from it, there is an image and resemblance of God; from whence this title is common to all reasonable creatures, and peculiar to them: for though matter may be ordered and fashioned by the hand of God into a figure of admirable beauty, yet it is not capable of his likeness and image; so that neither the lights of heaven, nor the beasts and plants of the earth are called his children.

Secondly. By external calling and covenant some are denominated his children; for by this evangelical constitution God is pleased to receive believers into a filial relation. Indeed where

there is not a cordial consent and subjection to the terms of the covenant, visible profession, and the receiving the external seals of it, will be of no advantage; but the public serious owning of the gospel, entitles a person to be of the society of christians; and *filius* and *fœderatus* are all one.

Thirdly. There is a sonship that arises from supernatural regeneration; that is the communicating a new nature to man, whereby there is a holy and blessed change in the directive and commanding faculties, the understanding and will, and in the affections, and consequently in the whole life. This is wrought by the efficacy of the word and Spirit, and is called by our Saviour regeneration, because it is not our original carnal birth, but a second and celestial. It is with the new man in grace, as with an infant in nature, that has the essential parts that compose a man; a soul endowed with all its faculties, a body with all its organs and parts, but not in the vigour of mature age. Thus renewed holiness in a christian, is complete and entire in its parts, but not in perfection of degrees; there is an universal inclination to all that is holy, just and good, and a universal aversion from sin, though the executive power be not equal. And regenerate christians are truly called the children of God; for as in natural generation there is communicated a principle of life and suitable operations, from whence the title and relation of a father arises; so in regeneration there are derived such holy and heavenly qualities to the soul, as constitute a divine nature in man, whereby he is partaker of the life and likeness of God himself: from hence he is a child of God, and has an interest and propriety in his favour, power and promises, and all the good that flows from them, and a title to the eternal inheritance.

II. I will show what is included in our love to the children of God.

First. The principle of this love is divine. "The soul is purified through the Spirit to unfeigned love of the brethren." 1 Pet. 1. 22. Naturally the judgment is corrupted, and the will depraved, that carnal respects either of profit or pleasure are the quick and sensible incitements of love; and till the soul be cured of the sensual contagion, the inclination can never be directed, and the desires fastened on the supernatural image of God in his saints. As holiness in the creature is a ray derived

from the infinite beauty of God's holiness, so the love of holiness is a spark from the sacred fire of his love. St. John exhorts christians, "let us love one another, for love is of God." 1 John 4. 7. Natural love among men is by his general providence, but a gracious love to the saints is by his special influence. The natural affection must be "baptized with the Holy Ghost, as with fire," to refine it to a divine purity.

Secondly. The qualifications of this love are as follow:

1. It is sincere and cordial; it does not appear only in expressions from the tongue and countenance, but springs from the integrity of the heart. It is styled "unfeigned love of the brethren; it is a love not in word and tongue only, but in deed and truth." A counterfeit formal affection, set off with artificial colours, is so far from being pleasing to God, the searcher and judge of hearts, that it is infinitely provoking to him.

2. It is pure; the attractive cause of it is the image of God appearing in them. Our Saviour assures us, that love shall be gloriously rewarded, that respects a disciple upon that account as a disciple, and a righteous man as a righteous man. The holy love commanded in the gospel, is to christians for their divine relation, as the children of God, as the members of Christ, and temples of the Holy Ghost.

3. From hence it is universal, extended to all the saints. The church is composed of christians that are different in their gifts and graces, and in their external order; some excel in knowledge, and zeal, and love, in active graces; others in humility, meekness and patience, that sustain and adorn them in sufferings; some are in a higher rank, others are in humble circumstances: as in the visible world things are placed suitably to their natures, the stars in the heavens, flowers in the earth; and our special respects are due to those whom the favour of God has dignified above others, and in whom the brightness and power of grace shines more clearly: for according as there are more reasons that make a person deserving love, the degrees of love should rise in proportion. But a dear affection is due even to the lowest saints; for all have communion in the same holy nature, and are equally instated in the same blessed alliance.

4. It must be fervent, not only in truth, but in a degree of eminency. St. Peter joins the two qualifications; "see that ye

love one another with a pure heart fervently." Our Saviour sets before us his own pattern, as a pillar of fire to direct and inflame us; "This is my commandment, that ye love one another as I have loved you." John 15. 12. "As I have loved you!" Admirable example! His love was singular and superlative; a love that saves and astonishes us at once; for he willingly gave his precious life for our ransom. This we should endeavour to resemble, though our highest expressions of love and compassion to the saints, are but a weak and imperfect imitation of his divine perfection.

I shall add farther; this love includes all kinds of love.

(1.) The love of esteem correspondent to the real worth and special goodness of the saints. It is one character of a citizen of heaven, that "in his eyes a vile person is contemned," Psal. 15. however set off by the glory of the world, and the ornaments of the present state, that, as a false mask, conceal their foul deformity to carnal persons; "but he honours them that fear the Lord," though disfigured by calumnies, though obscured and depressed by afflictions, and made like their blessed head, in whom there was "no form nor comeliness in the judgment of fools." In our valuation, divine grace should turn the scales against all the natural or acquired perfections of body or mind; beauty, strength, wit, eloquence, human wisdom; against all the external advantages of this life, nobility, riches, power, and whatever is admired by a carnal eye. The judgment and love of God should regulate ours. A saint is more valued by God, than the highest princes; nay, than the angels themselves, considered only with respect to their spiritual nature. He calls them "his peculiar treasure, his jewels, the firstfruits of the creatures," sacred for his use and glory, in comparison of whom, the rest of the world are but dregs, a corrupt mass. They are styled "his sons;" being partakers of that life of which he is the author and pattern: and what are all the titles on earth, compared with so divine a dignity.

(2.) The love of desire, of their present and future happiness. The perfection of love consists more in the desire than in the effects; and the continued fervent prayers that the saints present to God for one another, are the expressions of their love.

(3.) The love of delight, in spiritual communion with them.

All the attractives of human conversation, wit, mirth, sweetness of behaviour, and wise discourse, cannot make any society so dear and pleasant to one that is a lover of holiness, as the communion of saints. David, whose breast was very sensible of the tender affections of love and joy, tells us, that "the saints in the earth, the excellent, were the chief objects of his delight." Psal. 16. And consequent to this, there is a cordial sympathy with them in their joys and sorrows, being members of the same body, and having an interest in all their good or evil. It is observable, when the Holy Spirit describes the sweetest human comforts that are the present reward of the godly man, the enjoyment of his estate in the dear society of his wife and children, there is a promise annexed, that sweetens all the rest, that "he shall see the good of Jerusalem, and peace upon Israel." Psal. 128. Without this all temporal comforts are mixed with bitter displeasure to him. There is an eminent instance of this in Nehemiah, whom all the pleasures of the Persian court could not satisfy, whilst Jerusalem was desolately miserable. Neh. 2.

(4.) The love of service and beneficence, that declares itself in all outward offices and acts for the good of the saints: and these are various; some are of a sublimer nature, and concern their souls; as spiritual counsel and instruction, compassionate admonition and consolation, the confirming them in good, and the fortifying them against evil, the doing whatever may preserve and advance the life and vigour of the inward man; others respect their bodies and temporal condition; directing them in their affairs, protecting them from injuries, supplying their wants, universally assisting them for their tolerable passage through the world. And all these acts are to be cheerfully performed; there is more joy in conferring than receiving a benefit, because love is more exercised in the one than the other. In short, the highest effect of love that comprises all the rest, is to die for the brethren; and this we ought to do when the honour of God, and welfare of the church require it. "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." If christians thus loved one another, the church on earth would be a lively image of the blessed society above.

III. The love of God, and obedience to his commands, the product of it, are to be considered.

The love of God has its rise from the consideration of his amiable excellencies, that render him infinitely worthy of the highest affection; and from the blessed benefits of creation, preservation, redemption and glorification, that we may expect from his pure goodness and mercy. This is the most clear and essential character of a child of God, and most peculiarly distinguishes him from unrenewed men, however accomplished by civil virtues.

Now the internal exercise of love to God, in the valuation of his favour, as that which is better than life, in earnest desires of communion with him, in ravishing joy in the testimonies and assurance of his love, in mourning for what is displeasing to him, is in the secret of the soul; but with this there is inseparably joined a true and visible declaration of our love in obedience to him. "This is the love of God, the most real and undeceitful expression of it, "that we keep his commandments." 1 John 3. 16.

The obedience that springs from love, is,

1. Uniform and universal; for the two principal and necessary effects of love are an ardent desire to please God, and an equal care not to displease him in any thing. Now the law of God is the signification of his sovereign and holy will, and the doing of it is very pleasing to him, both upon the account of the subjection of the creature to his authority, and conformity to his purity: he declares that obedience is better than the most costly sacrifice. There is an absolute peremptory repugnance between love to him, and despising his commands: and from thence it follows, that love inclines the soul to obey all God's precepts, not only those of easy observation, but the most difficult and distasteful to the carnal appetites; for the authority of God runs through all, and his holiness shines in all. Servile fear is a partial principle, and causes an unequal respect to the divine law; it restrains from sins of greater guilt, from such disorderly and dissolute actions at which conscience takes fire; but others are indulged: it excites to good works of some kind, but neglects others that are equally necessary. But love regards the whole law in all its injunctions and prohibitions; not merely to please ourselves, that we may not feel the stings of an accusing conscience, but to please the lawgiver.

2. The obedience of love is accurate; and this is a natural

consequence of the former. The divine law is a rule not only for our outward conversation, but of our thoughts and affections, of all the interior workings of the soul, that are open before God. Thus it requires religious service, not only in the external performance, but those reverent holy affections, those pure aims, wherein the life and beauty, the spirit and true value of divine worship consists. Thus it commands the duties of equity, charity and sobriety, all civil and natural duties for divine ends, to "please and glorify God." Heb. 13. 16. It forbids all kinds and degrees of sin; not only gross acts, but the inward lustings that have a tendency to them. Now the love of God is the principle of spiritual perfection. It is called "the fulfilling of the law," 1 Cor. 10. 31. not only as it is a comprehensive grace, but in that it draws forth all the active powers of the soul to obey it in an exact manner. This causes a tender sense of our failings, and a severe circumspection over our ways, that nothing be allowed that is displeasing to the divine eyes. Since the most excellent saints are God's chiefest favourites, love makes the holy soul to strive to be like him in all possible degrees of purity. Thus St. Paul, in whom the love of Christ was the imperial commanding affection, declares, his zealous endeavour to be "conformable to the death of Christ," in dying to sin, as Christ died for sin, and that "he might attain to the resurrection of the dead," Phil. 3. 10, 11. that perfection of holiness that is in the immortal state.

3. The obedience of love is chosen and pleasant. "This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments, and his commandments are not grievous." 1 John 5. 3. Those that are strangers to this heavenly affection, imagine that a solicitous diligent respect to all God's precepts, is a melancholy task; but it is delightful to the saints: for obedience is the continual exercise of love to God, the paradise of holy souls. The mortification of the carnal appetites, and the restraint from such objects as powerfully insinuate and engage carnal hearts, is with a freer complacency to a saint, than a sensual fruition of them. The sharpest sufferings for religion are allayed, nay sweetend to a saint from the love of God, that is then most sincerely, strongly, and purely acted. The apostle more rejoiced in sharp tribulation for Christ's sake, than in divine revelation.

4. The love of God produces persevering obedience. Servile

compliance is inconstant. A slave hates the duties he performs, and loves the sins he dares not commit; therefore as soon as he is released from his chain and his fear, his obedience ceases: but a son is perfectly pleased with his Father's will, and the tenor of his life is correspondent to it. He that is pressed by fear to serve in an army, will desert his colours the first opportunity; but a volunteer, that for the love of valour, and of his country, lists himself, will continue in the service. The motion that is caused by outward poises, will cease when the weights are down; but that which proceeds from an inward principle of life, is continual; and such is the love of God planted in the breast of a christian.

IV. We are to prove that from the love of God, and willing obedience to his commands, we may convincingly know the sincerity of our love to his children.

There is an inseparable union between these two graces, and the one arises out of the other. "Godliness and brotherly kindness" are joined by the apostle. And it will be evident that where this affection of love to the saints is sincere and gracious, there will be an entire and joyful respect to the law of God, by considering the reasons and motives of it.

First. The divine command requires this love. "These things I command you," saith our Saviour, "that ye love one another." This precept so often repeated, and powerfully reinforced by him, made so deep an impression on the first christians, that "they had one heart, and one soul, and their estates were common between them." And in the next succeeding ages, this fraternal love was so conspicuous in the professors of his sacred discipline, that their enemies observed it as a rare and remarkable thing: * "See how the christians love one another! See how ready they are to die for one another!" Now the same gracious principle that inclines us to do one command, will make us universally willing to observe all; for sincere obedience primarily respects the authority of the lawgiver, which binds the whole law upon the conscience. And as he that "breaks the law wilfully in one point, is guilty of all," Jam. 2. because the violation of a single precept proceeds from the same cause that induces men to transgress all, that is, contempt of the divine

* Tert. Apol. c. 39.

majesty; so he that sincerely obeys one command, does with consent of heart, and serious endeavours obey all. And from hence it is clear, that without a religious and unreserved regard of the divine commands, it is impossible there should be in any person a gracious affection to the saints; that is the product of obedience to God, and consequently the observance of his precepts, is the certain proof of our love to his children.

Secondly. Spiritual love to the saints arises from the sight of the divine image appearing in their conversation. Now if the beauty of holiness be the attractive of our love, it will be fastened on the law of God in the most intense degree. The most excellent saints on earth have some mixtures of corruption; their holiness is like the morning-light, that is checkered with the shadows and obscurity of the night; and it is our wisdom not to love their infirmities, but to preserve an unstained affection to them. But the law of God is the fairest transcript of his nature, wherein his glorious holiness is most resplendent. "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes." Psal. 19. 7, 8. This ravished the heart of David with an inexpressible affection. "O how I love thy law! It is my meditation all the day." Psal. 119. And he repeats the declaration of his love to it with new fervour, upon this ground; "I love thy law, because it is pure." Now love to the commands of God will transcribe them in our hearts and lives. As affectionate expressions to the children of God, without the real supply of their wants, are but the shadows of love; so words of esteem and respect to the law of God, without unfeigned and universal obedience, are but an empty pretence.

Thirdly. The divine relation of the saints to God as their Father, is the motive of spiritual love to them. And this is consequent to the former; for by partaking of his holiness, they partake of his life and likeness. And from hence they are the dearest objects of his love; his eye and heart are always upon them. Now if this consideration excites love to the children of God, it will be as powerful to incline us to keep his commands; for the law of God, that is the copy of his sacred will, is most near to his nature, and he is infinitely tender of it. Our Saviour tells us, that "it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away, than for one tittle of the law to fail." Luke 16. 17. If the entire

world, and all the inhabitants of it were destroyed, there would be no loss to God; but if the law lose its authority and obligation, the divine holiness would suffer a blemish.

The use of the doctrine is, to try our love to the children of God, to which all pretend, by this infallible rule, our obedience to his commands. This is absolutely necessary, because the deceit is so easy and so dangerous: and it will be most comfortable, if upon this trial our love be found to be spiritual and divine. The deceit is easy, because acts of love may be expressed to the saints from other principles than the love of God: some for vain-glory are bountiful; and when their charity seems so visibly divine, that men admire it, there is the worm of vanity at the root, that corrupts and makes it odious to God. The pharisees are charged with this by our Saviour; Mat. 6. 2. their alms were not the effect of charity, but ostentation; and whilst they endeavoured to make their vices virtuous, they made their virtues vicious. There is a natural love among persons united by consanguinity, that remains so entire since the ruin of mankind by the fall, and is rather from the force of nature, than the virtue of the will, and this in all kind offices may be expressed to the saints. There is a sweetness of temper in some, that inclines them to wish well to all, and such tender affections that are easily moved and melted at the sight of others miseries; and such may be beneficent and compassionate to the saints in their afflictions: but the spring of this love is good-nature, not divine grace. There are human respects that incline others to kindness to the saints, as they are united by interest, fellow-citizens and neighbours, and as they receive advantage by commerce with them, or as obliged by their benefits: but civil amity and gratitude are not that holy affection that is an assurance of our spiritual state. There are other motives of love to the saints, that are not so low nor mercenary; in the thickest darkness of paganism, the light of reason discovered the amiable excellence of virtue, as becoming the human nature, and useful for the tranquillity and welfare of mankind; and the moral goodness that adorns the saints, the innocence, purity, meekness, justice, clemency, benignity, that are visible in their conversations, may draw respects from others who are strangers to the love of God, and careless of his commandments.

And as the mistake of this affection is easy, so it is infinitely

dangerous; for he that builds his hope of heaven upon a "sandy foundation," upon false grounds, will fall ruinously from his hopes and felicity at last. How fearful will be the disappointment of one that has been a favourer of the saints, that has defended their cause, protected their persons, relieved their necessities, and presumed for this, that his condition is safe as to eternity, though he lives in the known neglect of other duties, and the indulgent practice of some sin?

But if we find that our love to the children of God flows from our love to God, that sways the soul to an entire compliance to his commands, and makes us observant of them in the course of our lives: what a blessed hope arises from this reflection? We need not have the book of the divine decrees opened, and the secrets of election unveiled; "for we know that we are passed from death to life, if we love the brethren." 1 John 3. 14. This is an infallible effect and sign of the spiritual life, and the seed and evidence of eternal life.

SERMON V.

HOW TO BEAR AFFLICTIONS.

HEBREWS XII. 5.

My son despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him.

THE words are an excellent passage from the book of the Proverbs; Prov. 3. 12. wherein the supreme eternal wisdom is represented, giving instruction to the afflicted, how to behave themselves under troubles, so as they may prove beneficial to them: the counsel is, that they should preserve a temperament of spirit, between the excess and defect of patience and courage, neither despising the chastenings of the Lord, by a sinful neglect of them as a small unconcerning matter, nor fainting under them, as a burden so great and oppressing, that no deliverance was to be expected. To enforce the exhortation, wisdom useth the amiable and endearing title, "My Son," to signify that God in the quality of a Father, corrects his people; the consideration whereof is very proper to conciliate reverence to his hand, and to encourage their hopes of a blessed issue.

The proposition that arises from the words is this;

It is the duty and best wisdom of afflicted christians, to pre-

serve themselves from the vicious extremes of despising the chastenings of the Lord, or fainting under them.

To illustrate this by a clear method, I shall endeavour to show,

I. What it is to despise the chastenings of the Lord, and the causes of it.

II. What fainting under his rebukes signifies, and what makes us incident to it.

III. Prove that it is the duty and best wisdom of the afflicted to avoid these extremes.

IV. Apply it.

I. i. To despise the chastenings of the Lord, imports the making no account of them, as unworthy of serious regard; and includes Ολιγώρια inconsiderateness of mind, and an insensibleness of heart.

1. *Inconsiderateness of mind*, with respect to the author or end of chastenings.

(1.) With respect to the author, when the afflicted looks only downwards, as if the rod of affliction sprang out of the dust, Job 5. 6. and there were no superior cause that sent it.

Thus many apprehend the evils that befal them, either merely as the productions of natural causes, or as casual events, or the effects of the displeasure and injustice of men, but never look on the other side of the veil of the second causes, to that invisible providence that orders all. If a disease strikes their bodies, they attribute it to the extremity of heat or cold, that distempers their humours: if a loss comes in their estates, it is ascribed to chance, carelessness and falseness of some upon whom they depended; but God is concealed from their sight by the nearness of the immediate agent. Whereas the principal cause of all temporal evil is the overruling providence of God. "Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?" Amos 3. 6. They come not only with his knowledge and will, but by his efficiency. The locusts that infected Egypt, Exod. 10. 13, 19. are as real an effect of God's wrath, as the most miraculous plague, although an east wind brought them, and a west wind carried them away. The arrow that was shot at a venture, and pierced between the joints of Ahab's armour, 1 Kings 22. 34. was directed by the hand of God for his destruction. Shimei's cursing of David, though it was the overflowing of his gall, the effect of

his malignity, yet that holy king looked higher, and acknowledged the Lord hath bidden him. As the Lord is a God of power, 1 Sam. 16. 11. and can inflict what judgments he pleaseth immediately; so he is a God of order, and usually punisheth in this world by subordinate means. Now wherever he strikes, though his hand is wrapped up in a cloud, yet if it be not observed, especially if by habitual incogitancy men consider not with whom they have to do in their various troubles, this profane neglect is no less than a despising the chastenings of the Lord.

(2.) Inconsiderateness of the end of the divine discipline, is a great degree of contempt. The evils that God inflicts are as real a part of his providence, as the blessings he bestows; as in the course of nature the darkness of the night is by his order, as well as the light of the day: therefore they are always sent for some wise and holy design. Sometime, though more rarely, they are only for trial, to exercise the faith, humility, patience of eminent saints; for otherwise God would lose in a great measure the honour and renown, and his favourites the reward of those graces, afflictions being the sphere of their activity. But for the most part they are castigatory, to bring us to a sight and sense of our state, to render sin more evident and odious to us. They are fitly expressed, by pouring from vessel to vessel, that discovers the dregs and sediment, and makes it offensive, that before was concealed. The least affliction even to the godly, is usually an application of the physician of spirits for some growing distemper: every corrosive is for some proud flesh that must be taken away. In short, they are deliberate dispensations to cause men to reflect upon their works and ways, and break off their sins by sincere obedience. Therefore we are commanded "to hear the voice of the rod, and who hath appointed it." Mic. 6. 5. It is a preacher of repentance, to lead us to the knowledge and consideration of ourselves. The distress of Joseph's brethren was to revive their memory of his sorrows caused by their cruelty. Now when men disregard the embassy of the rod, are unconvincible, notwithstanding its lively lessons; when they neither look up to him that strikes, nor within to the cause that provokes his displeasure; when they are careless to reform their ways, and to comply with his holy will, as if afflictions were only common accidents of this mutable state, the effects of rash for-

tune or blind fate, without design and judgment, and not sent for their amendment, this is a prodigious despising of God's hand. For this reason the scripture compares men to the most inobservant creatures, to "the wild ass' colt, the deaf adder, to the silly dove without heart:" Job 11. 12. Psal. 58. 4. Hos. 7. 11. and the advantage is on the beasts' side, for their inconsideration proceeds merely from the incapacity of matter, of which they are wholly composed to perform reflex acts: but man's incogitancy is the sole fault of his spirit, that wilfully neglects his duty. The prophet charges this guilt upon the Jews, "Lord, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see." Isa. 26. 11.

2. *Insensibility of heart* is an eminent degree of despising the Lord's chastenings. A pensive feeling of judgments is very congruous, whether we consider them *in genere physico*, or *morali*; either materially as afflictive to nature, or as the signs of divine displeasure: for the affections were planted in the human nature by the hand of God himself, and are duly exercised in proportion to the quality of their objects. And when grace comes, it softens the breast, and gives a quick and tender sense of God's frown. An eminent instance we have in David, though of heroical courage; yet in his sad ascent to Mount Olivet, 2 Sam. 15. 30. he went up weeping with his head covered, and his feet bare, to testify his humble and submissive sense of God's anger against him. Now when men are insensible of judgments, either considered as natural or penal evils; if when they suffer the loss of relations or other troubles, they presently fly to the comforts of the heathens, that we are all mortal, and what cannot be helped must be endured, without the sense humanity requires; that calm is like that of the dead sea, a real curse: or suppose natural affection works a little, yet there are no apprehension and concernment for God's displeasure, which should be infinitely more affecting than any outward trouble, how sharp soever, no serious deep humiliation under his hand, no yielding up ourselves to his management; this most justly provokes him: of this temper were those described by Jeremiah, "Thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; thou hast consumed them, but they refused to receive correction." Jer. 5. 3.

ii. The causes of this despising of God's chastenings are:

1. A contracted stupidity of soul, proceeding from a course in sin. There is a natural stubbornness and contumacy in the heart

against God, a vicious quality derived from rebellious Adam; we are all hewn out of the rock, and digged out of the quarry: and this is one of the worst effects of sin, and a great part of its deceitfulness, that by stealth it increaseth the natural hardness, by degrees it creeps on like a gangrene, Heb. 3. 13. and causes an indolency. The practice of sin makes the heart like an adamant, Zech. 7. 12. the hardest of stones, that exceeds that of rocks. From hence proceeds such unteachableness of the mind, that when God speaks and strikes, yet sinners will not be convinced; that briars and thorns are only effectual to teach them; and such an untractableness in the will, that when the sinner is stormed by affliction, and some light breaks into the understanding, yet it refuseth to obey God's call.

2. Carnal diversions are another cause of slighting God's hand. The pleasures and cares of the world, Luke 21. 34. as they render men inapprehensive of judgments to come, so regardless of those that are present. Some when ever they feel the smart of a cross, use all the arts of oblivion to lose the sense of it. The affliction instead of leading them to repentance, leads them to vain conversations, to comedies and other sinful delights, to drive away sorrow. Others, although they do not venture upon forbidden things to relieve their melancholy, yet when God by sharp and sensible admonitions calls upon them, they have presently recourse to temporal comforts, which although lawful and innocent in themselves, yet are as improper at that time, as the taking of a cordial when a vomit begins to work: for whereas chastisements are sent to awaken and affect us, by considering our sins in their bitter fruits, this unseasonable application of sensual comforts wholly defeats God's design. For nothing so much hinders serious consideration as a voluptuous indulging the senses in things pleasing; like opiate medicines, they stupify the conscience, and benumb the heart. It is Solomon's expression, "I said of laughter, it is mad:" for as distraction breaks the connexion of the thoughts, so mirth shuffles our most serious thoughts into disorder, and causes men to pass over their troubles without reflection and remorse. 1 Kings 16.

And as the pleasures, so the business of the world causes a supine security under judgments. We have an amazing instance of it in Hiel the Bethlemite, who laid the foundation of his city in the death of his first-born, and set up the gates of it in his

youngest son; yet he was so intent upon his building, that he disregarded the divine Nemesis, Josh. 6. 26. that was apparent, fulfilling the terrible threatening prophesied against the builder of Jericho.

3. An obstinate fierceness of spirit, a diabolical fortitude is the cause that sometimes men despise afflicting providences so far as to resist them. There is a passive malignity in all, an inaptness to be wrought on, and to receive spiritual and heavenly impressions from God's hand; but in some of the sons of perdition there is an active malignity, whereby they furiously repel judgments as if they could oppose the Almighty. Their hearts are of an anvil-temper, made harder by afflictions, and reverberate the blow, like that Roman emperor, who instead of humbling and reforming at God's voice in thunder, thundered back again. All judgments that befal them, are as strokes given to wild beasts, that instead of taming them, enrage them to higher degrees of fierceness.

The prophet described some of this rank of sinners, who said "in the pride and stoutness of their hearts, the bricks are fallen down, but we will build with hewn stones: the sycamores are cut down, but we will change them into cedars." Isa. 9. 9, 10.

And many though explicitly, yet virtually declare a resolution, notwithstanding the most visible discouragements from heaven, to proceed in their sinful courses with more greediness, and from a sullen secret atheism are more strongly carried to gratify their lusts again, when they are in afflictions.

II. I shall proceed to consider the other extreme of fainting under God's rebukes.

1. The original word Ἐκλύω signifies the slackening and relaxing of things that were firmly joined together. The strength of the body proceeds from the union of the parts, when they are well compacted together. By their disjointing it is enfeebled, and rendered unfit for labour. In this metion the apostle in the 12th. verse "exhorts them to lift up the hands that hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees:" that is, to encourage and strengthen their souls by a real belief of the promises made to afflicted christians.

2. It may respect the sinking, and falling away of the soul like water, being hopeless of overcoming troubles. When water is frozen into hard ice, it will bear a great burden, but when it

is dissolved and melted, nothing is weaker. So the "spirit of a man" confirmed by religious principles, "is able to sustain all his infirmities." Prov. 19. 14. *Si fractus illabitur orbis*, if the weight of the heaviest afflictions fall upon him, yet his mind remains erect and unbroken, and bears them all with courage and constancy: but if through impatience under tribulation, and diffidence in the divine promises, we shrink from our duty, or reject "the comforts of God as if they were small," and not proportionable to the evils that oppress us; this is to faint when we are rebuked by him.

The causes of this despondency are usually;

(1.) Either the kind of the affliction: when there is a singularity in the case, it increaseth the apprehension of God's displeasure; because it may signify an extraordinary guilt, and singular unworthiness in the person that suffers; and upon that account, that sorrow swells so high as to overwhelm him.

(2.) The number and degrees of afflictions; when like those black clouds which in winter days join together, and quite intercept the beams of the sun: so many troubles meet at once, and deprive us of all present comfort. Job lost his children by a sudden unnatural death; and was tormented in all the parts of his body, and reduced from his rich abundance to the dunghil, and a potsherd to scrape his boils. Indeed his heroical spirit was supported under those numerous and grievous troubles, but such a weight were enough to sink the most.

(3.) The continuance of afflictions. When the clouds return after rain, and the life is a constant scene of sorrows, we are apt to be utterly dejected, and hopeless of good. The psalmist tells us, "All the day long I have been plagued, and chastened every morning;" Psal. 73. 14. and from thence was strongly tempted to despair.

(4.) Comparing their great sufferings with the prosperity of those who are extremely vicious, inclines some to despair. For not only their present evils are heightened, and more sensibly felt by the comparison, but the prosperous impiety of others tempts them to think there is no just and powerful providence that distributes things below; and looking no higher than to second causes, that are obvious to sense, they judge their state past recovery.

III. The next thing is to prove, that it is the duty and wis-

dom of the afflicted not to despise the chastenings of the Lord, nor to faint under them.

First, It is their duty carefully to avoid those extremes, because they are very dishonourable to God.

1. The contempt of chastisements is high profanation of God's honour, who is our father and sovereign, and in that quality afflicts us: it is our apostle's argument, "Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence; shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits, and live?" Heb. 12. 9. It is a principle deeply planted in the human nature, which the most barbarous nations have kept inviolable, to express the realest respect to our parents, from whom we derive our life, and by whose tender care we have been preserved, and educated, although their discipline be rigorous: but it is infinitely more just and reasonable, that we should reverently submit to the Father of spirits, who hath the highest right in us. As much as the immortal spirit excels the infirm corruptible flesh, proportionably should our reverence to God, when he most sharply rebukes us, exceed our respects to our earthly fathers when they correct us. The manner of the apostle's expression is very significant, "Shall we not much rather?" If there be any vital spark of conscience remaining in our breasts, if reason be not wholly declined to brutishness, we cannot do otherwise.

2. Fainting under chastenings reflects dishonourably upon God. It is true in some respects, those who are extremely dejected, are not so guilty as the despisers; for usually they acknowledge the order and justice of his providence. But that false conception of the Father of mercies, either that he willingly afflicts the children of men, or that he hates them because he afflicts them here, is so contrary to his holy nature, and injurious to his goodness, 1 John 4. 9. the special character of his nature, that it is an equal provocation, with the slighting of his sovereignty.

SERMON VI.

HOW TO BEAR AFFLICTIONS.

HEBREWS XII. 5.

My son despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him.

Secondly. I SHALL proceed to prove, it is the best wisdom not to despise God's chastenings, nor faint under them. I will not insist upon the consideration that it is the counsel of the supreme wisdom to us, nor that it is the avoiding the vicious extremes, which is the chiefest point of moral prudence: but it is the only way to prevent the greatest mischiefs that will otherwise befal us. It is said, he that is wise is profitable to himself, that is either in obtaining good, or preventing evils. Now it will appear how pernicious those extremes are, by considering; Job. 22. 21.

1. The contempt of chastenings, deprives us of all those benefits which were intended by them. God's end in them is to imbitter sin to our taste, and make us disrelish that deadly poison:

for as, according to the rules of physic, contraries are cured by contraries; so sin that prevails by pleasure, by something delightful to the carnal part, is mortified by what is afflictive to sense. Repentance is a duty that best complies with affliction: for when the spirit is made sad, and brought to the sobriety of consideration, it will more readily reflect upon the true causes of troubles: when the springs overflow, it is but directing the stream into a right channel, the changing the object of our grief, viz. mourning for sin instead of sorrowing for outward trouble, and we are in the way to happiness. Sensible sorrow leads to godly sorrow. The natural is first, then the spiritual. Now the despisers of God's hand, that are unaffected with judgments, are incapable of this benefit. For if they do not feel the blow, how shall they take notice of the hand that strikes? If they are not softened with sorrows, how shall they receive the divine impression? If they have no sense of his displeasure, how shall they fear to offend him for the future? If the medicine doth not work, how can it expel noxious humours?

2. The neglect of chastenings doth not only render them unprofitable, but exposes to greater evils.

(1.) It provokes God to withdraw his judgments for a time. This the sinner desired, and thinks himself happy that he is at ease: miserable delusion! This respite is the presage of his final ruin. It was the desperate state of Judah, as God expresses it, "why should ye be stricken any more? Ye will revolt more and more." Isa. 1. 5. The words of an anxious father that has tried all methods, counsel, kindness, corrections to reclaim a rebellious obstinate son; and finding no answerable effect, gives him over to follow the pernicious swing of his corrupt desires. No severity is like the suffering him in his licentious courses. Thus when God hath used many gracious ways to reduce the sinner, by his word, spirit and judgments, but he is inflexible to the calls of the word, impenetrable to the motions of the spirit, and insensible of afflicting providences; when after a combat with the rod, sin comes off unwounded, and the rod retires; this calm is more dreadful than the fiercest storm; nothing can be more fatal to the sinner, for by this divine desertion he is given over to a reprobate mind, and vile affections; he goes on undisturbed in his sins, and every day increaseth his enmity against God, and provokes God's enmity against him. It is not conceì-

vable that one who is not made pliable to the grace of God by afflictions, should submit when he is in pleasant circumstances, and disposed to enjoy sensual satisfactions. If the whip and spur cannot break and tame the unruly beast, certainly the rich pasture will never make him manageable. So that God's ceasing to punish the sinner at present is so far from being a favour, that it is the effect of his deepest displeasure; for it contributes to his hardening. It was the case of Pharaoh, when any of the plagues were removed: indulgence occasioned his induration. As water taken from the fire, freezes sooner and harder, than if the thinner parts had never been evaporated by the former heat; so when men are taken off from the fire of affliction, they are more confirmed in their vicious courses than if they had never been afflicted.

(2.) The slighting of lighter strokes, provokes God sometimes to bring more dreadful judgments in this life upon sinners. No man can endure that his love or anger should be despised. Nebuchadnezzar commanded the furnace to be heated seven times hotter for those who contemned his threatenings. God tells the Israelites, "if ye will not be reformed by these things, but will walk contrary unto me; then will I also walk contrary unto you, and will punish you yet seven times for your sins." Levit. 26. 23, 24. He will change the rods into scorpions, and will scourge them for their continued rebellions. It is the intent of that expostulation, "shall one take up a snare from the earth, and have taken nothing at all?" Amos 3. 5. Shall God remove his judgments while sinners are careless and unreformed, as if they might be final conquerors over them? No, he will multiply and greaten them. It may be at first God blasts part of the estate, and the sinner is not apprehensive of his hand; then he comes nearer and snatches away a dear relation: if still the sinner is unaffected, he strikes his body with a lingering, or acute disease: if still he be not concerned for God's displeasure, he wounds his spirit, makes him sick in sense and conscience at the same time, fills him with terror by the reflection upon his wicked ways, and the foresight of that dreadful tribunal before which he must appear; so that although he cannot live, he dares not die; though his earthly tabernacle be ready to fall upon him, he is afraid to go out and meet the Supreme Judge: and if this doth not work a sincere thorough change, God casts him into hell to the company

of the giants, those bold rebels that fought against God. Prov. 21. 16. Briefly, as under the law, an incorrigible son that neglected his father's reproofs, was to die without mercy; * so an unreformed sinner who kicks against the pricks, and refuses to submit to God's corrections, shall be cut off in his obstinacy; justice will proceed to excision, and acts of vengeance against him.

(3.) Fainting under chastenings is pernicious to sufferers: for it renders them utterly indisposed for the performance of duty, and incapable of receiving the comforts proper for an afflicted state.

1st. It renders them utterly indisposed for the performance of duty. Hope draws forth all the active powers of the soul; it is the great motive to diligence, and instrument of duty. Despair, like extremity of cold that checks the spring, and binds up the earth that its fruits cannot appear, hinders the free exercise of reason and grace, and cuts the sinews of obedience. He that is hopeless of a good issue out of troubles, will neither repent, nor pray, nor reform, but indulges barren tears instead of real duties.

Besides, it often falls out, that the same affliction is sent from God's displeasure upon his people for their sins, and is the effect of the rage of men against them upon the account of their professing his name. Such is the wisdom and goodness of God, that by the same fiery trial he may refine his servants from their dross and impurities, and render the glory of the gospel more conspicuous. The hatred of religion, and a blind fury may transport men to acts of cruelty against the saints; but it is by the permission of the universal sovereign, who hath the hearts of all in his hands, and suffers their rage for holy ends. The enemy designs against their faith, but God's aim is to make them reform their lives.

Now if either through strong fears, or the stinging sense of troubles upon the account of religion, our courage fails, we are presently in danger of falling away, and denying our master. The faint-hearted person is usually false-hearted, and for want of resolution, being frighted out of his conscience and duty, chooses sin rather than suffering, and thereby justly deprives

* Vid. Mr. Mede in loc.

himself "of the crown of life," that is promised only to "those who are faithful unto the death." Besides, not only the loss of heaven, but the torments of hell are threatened against those who withdraw from the service of God to avoid temporal evils. The "fearful and unbelieving are in the front of those that shall have part in the lake of fire and brimstone, which is the second death." Rev. 21. 8. Now what folly is it when two evils are propounded, to choose the greatest; that is, eternal death rather than temporal: and of two goods to prefer the less; a short life with its conveniencies on earth, before that which is eternally glorious in heaven? By which it appears how much it concerns us to fortify and fix our minds by a steadfast belief of God's supporting presence with us in all troubles, and of his gracious promise, that in due time we shall reap if we faint not in well-doing.

2dly. They are incapable of the comforts proper to an afflicted state. Those arise from the belief, "that God loves whom he chastens:" Rev. 3. for the least sin is a greater evil than the greatest trouble; and his design is to take that away, and from the expectation of a happy issue. Hope is the anchor within the veil, that in the midst of storms and roughest seas, preserves from shipwreck. The character of christians is, that they "are rejoicing in hope:" Rom. 12. 12. but when the afflicted are under fearful impressions that God is an irreconcileable enemy; and sadly conclude their miseries are past redress, those divine comforts that are able to sweeten the most bitter sufferings to believers, are of no efficacy. Their deep sorrows are not like the pains of a travailing woman that end in a joyful birth, but the killing tortures of the stone that are fruitless to the patient. An obstinate grief, and rejecting the consolations of God, "is the beginning of sorrows," the first payment of that sad arrear of mourning that shall be exacted in another world.

IV. The use shall be to excite us to those duties that are directly contrary to the extremes forbidden, viz. To demean ourselves under the chastenings of the Lord with a deep reverence and humble fear of his displeasure, and with a firm hope and dependance upon him for a blessed issue upon our complying with his holy will.

1. With an humble reverence of his hand. This temper is absolutely necessasy and most congruous with respect to God, upon the account of his sovereignty, justice and goodness declared in

his chastenings; and with respect to our frailty, our dependance upon him, our obnoxiousness to his law, and our obligations to him, that he will please to afflict us for our good.

This is the reason of that expostulation, "Will a lion roar in the forest, when he hath no prey?" Amos 3. 4. Shall God's threatenings and judgments have no effect? "Who ever hardened himself against him, and prospered? Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy," the most sensible and severe attribute when it is incensed? "Are we stronger than he?" Can we encounter offended omnipotency? Can we with an army of lusts oppose myriads of mighty angels? It is not courage, but such a prodigious degree of folly and fury, that one would think it were impossible a reasonable creature were capable of it. Yet every sinner unreformed by afflictions is thus desperate: "he stretches out his hand against God, and strengthens himself against the Almighty; he runneth upon him, even on his neck, upon the thick bosses of his bucklers." Job 15. 25. 26. Such a furious rebel was Ahaz, who "in the time of his distress, did trespass more against the Lord: this is that king Ahaz!" 2 Chron. 28. But God hath most solemnly declared, that he will be victorious at last over the most fierce and obdurate enemies. "As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me." His power is infinite, and anger puts an edge upon his power, and makes it more terrible. If our subjection be not voluntary, it must be violent. It is our wisdom to prevent acts of vengeance by humble submissions. The duty of the afflicted is excellently expressed by Elihu: "Surely it is meet to be said to God, I have borne chastisements, I will not offend any more. That I know not, teach thou me: if I have done iniquity, I will do so no more." Job. 34. 31, 32.

Add further, upon another account reverence is due to God's chastenings: for when love is the motive that incites one to give us counsel, though it be mixed with reproofs, and his prudence is not great, yet a respect is due to the affection. Now God who is only wise, chastises men from a desire to make them better and happy; he intends primarily to refine, not to consume them by afflictions: so that a serious regard to his hand is the most just and necessary duty of the creature. Briefly, every chastisement should leave deep and permanent impressions upon us; the sense of God's displeasure should make our hearts

mournful and mollified, broken and contrite, that his will may be done by us on earth as it is in heaven.

2. Let us always preserve an humble dependance and firm hope on God, for a blessed issue out of all our troubles: the support and tranquillity of the soul ariseth from hence. Christian patience suffers all things as well as charity, being encouraged by a continual expectation of good from him. Patience confirms all other graces, and is to the whole armour of God, what the temper is to material weapons, that keeps them from breaking in the combat. Now to maintain a constant hope in affliction, it is necessary to consider the reason of the exhortation as it is admirably amplified by the apostle.

(1.) The relation God sustains when he afflicts believers. He is a judge invested with the quality of a father. The covenant of grace between God and Jesus Christ, our true David, contains this observable clause, "If thy children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments, if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; then will I visit their transgressions with a rod, and their iniquity with stripes." Psal. 89. 30, 31, 32.

The love that ariseth from this relation, though it cannot hate, yet it may be displeased, and chastise them for their follies. Moses tells the Israelites, "Thou shalt consider in thy heart, that as a man chastens his son, so the Lord thy God chastens thee." Deut. 8. 5. In children reason is not fully disclouded, they are not capable to govern themselves, and are only taught with sensible pleasure or pain? So that a father is obliged to join correction with instruction, to form them to virtue. This is so far from being inconsistent with paternal affection, that it is inseparable from it. For a parent to suffer a child to go on pleasantly in sin without due punishment, is pure cruelty disguised under the mask of pity: for by the neglect of discipline he is confirmed in his vicious courses, and exposed to ruin. The apostle therefore adds, "whom the Lord loves, he chastens:" as from the severest wrath he sometimes forbeareth to strike, so from dearest love he afflicts. Humble believers through a cloud of tears may see the light of God's countenance: for having elected them by special love to a glorious inheritance above, he dispenseth all things here in order to the preparing them for it; and all temporal evils, as means, are transformed

into the nature of the end to which they are subservient. So that the sharpest sufferings are really from God's favour, since they are beneficial for our obtaining real happiness. The devil usually tempts men in a paradise of delights, to precipitate them into hell: God tries them in the furnace of afflictions, to purify and prepare them for heaven.

(2.) It is a strong cordial against fainting, to consider that by virtue of the paternal relation "he scourges every son whom he receives:" for no troubles are more afflictive and stinging than those that are unexpected. Now when we are assured that there is no son whom the heavenly Father doth not chasten, we are less surprised when we meet with crosses. Indeed there is hardly any kind of affliction that may befal us, but we have some instance in scripture of the saints suffering the same. Are we poor and mean in the world? we should consider that poverty with holiness is a divine complexion: Jesus Christ the holy and beloved Son of God, had not where to lay his head. Are we under bodily distempers? good Hezekiah was struck with an uncomfortable disease as to the quality of it; and Gaius had a flourishing soul in a languishing body. Are our dear relations taken away? Aaron and David lost some of their sons by terrible strokes. Are our spirits wounded with the sense of God's displeasure? Job and Heman were under strong terrors, yet the favourites of heaven. Briefly, how many most dear to God were called forth to extreme and bloody trials for defence of the truth? How many deaths did they endure in one torment? How many torments in one death? yet they were so far from fainting, that the more their pains were exasperated, the more their courage and joy was shining and conspicuous; as the face of the heavens is never more serene and clear, than when the sharpest north wind blows. It is the apostle's inference, "Seeing we are compassed with such a cloud of witnesses, let us run with patience the race that is set before us."

This is further enforced by the following words, "if ye be without chastening, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons." Ver. 8. If God doth not vouchsafe us the mercy of his rod, it is evident we are not part of his fatherly care. The bramble is neglected, while the vine is cut till it bleeds. It is a miserable privilege to be exempted from divine discipline, and by ease and prosperity to be corrupted and made

fit for destruction. St. Austin represents one expostulating with God: *O Deus, ista est justitia tua, ut mali floreant, & boni laborent!* in Psal. 25. O God, it is righteous with thee, that the wicked should prosper, and the good suffer! *Dicis Deo, ista est justitia tua? & Deus tibi, istu est fides tua? hæc enim tibi promisi? ad hoc christianus factus es, ut in seculo isto floreres, & in inferno postea torquereris?* God replies to him, Is this your faith? Did I promise you temporal prosperity? Were you a christian for this, that you might flourish in this world, and be miserably tormented in hell?

The apostle represents the special prerogative of God "as the Father of Spirits," ver. 9. and so hath a nearer claim to us than the fathers of our flesh, and that he is not liable to those imperfections that attend the earthly relations. "They for a few days chastened us for their own pleasure." Human love is a troubled irregular passion, mixed with ignorance, and prone to error in the excess or defect. Sometimes parents are indulgent, and by a cruel compassion spare their children when they are faulty: sometimes they correct without cause, sometimes when the reason is just, yet they err in the manner or measure of the correction, so that their children are discouraged. But in God there is a perfect union of wisdom and love, of discretion and tenderness; his affection is without the least imperfection. His will is always guided by infinite wisdom. If his children offend, he will chastise them with the rod of men, 2 Sam. 7. 14. that is, moderately; for as in scripture things are magnified by the epithet, divine or of God, so they are lessened by the epithet, human. Accordingly the apostle declares to the Corinthians, that "no temptation had befallen them, but such as is common to men: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." 1 Cor. 10. 13. As a prudent physician consults the strength of the patient as well as the quality of the disease, and proportions his medicine; so all the bitter ingredients, their mixture and measure, are dispensed by the wise prescription of God, according to the degrees of strength that are in his people.

The apostle specifies the immediate end of God in his chastenings: "but he for profit, that we may be partakers of his holiness." This is the supreme excellency of the divine nature, and

our conformity to it is so valuable, that it renders afflictions not only tolerable, but so far desirable as they contribute to it. In the present state our graces are imperfect, and our conformity to the divine purity is like the resemblance of the sun in a watery cloud, very much beneath the perfection and radiancy of that great light. Now God is pleased to fashion us according to his image by afflictions. As a statue is cut by the artificer, to bring it into a beautiful form.

He is pleased to bring us into divers temptations to try our faith, to work in us patience, to inflame our prayers, to mortify our carnal desires, to break those voluntary bonds whereby we are fettered to the earth, that we may live with those affections wherewith others die. And certainly if we make a true judgment of things, we have not the least cause to suspect the love of God when he chastises us, to take away sin the only abominable object of his hatred and deep detestation, and to render us partakers of the divine nature. "And the present peaceable fruit of righteousness is the product in those who are duly exercised by their troubles." It is an allusion to the reward of the conquerors in the Olympic games, who had a crown of olives, the emblem and shadow of peace. But true peace, a divine calm in the conscience, shall be the recompence of all that exercise their graces suitable to an afflicted state. In short, the apostle assures believers, that they are "chastened of the Lord, to prevent their condemnation with the world." 1 Cor. 11. 32. The correcting rod delivers them from hell. This consideration changes thorns into roses, and extracts honey out of wormwood; if the way be stony or showery that leads to blessedness, a christian should willingly walk in it. To conclude; from the consideration of what the scripture declares concerning temporal evils, let us "lift up the hands that hang down, and the feeble knees; and make straight paths for our feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed:" i. e. in our affliction, let us take courage and resolution from the promises, and live in a holy conformity to God's will, that the weak or faint may be restored.

The first and last lesson of Pagan philosophy was to support men under the storms to which they are liable in this open state, to render the soul *velut pelagi rupes immota*, as a rock unshaken by the waves.

But all their directions were unsuccessful, and so could not secure them from impatience or despair. But the gospel that assures us of the love of God in sending afflictions for our spiritual and eternal good, is alone able to compose the mind. And whenever we faint in troubles, it is either from infidelity or inconsideration; it is impossible a person should be a christian, and be incapable of comfort in the most afflicted state: for we are really so by the Holy Spirit, who is the comforter. When we speak sometimes to those we judge infirm, we speak to infidels, who only receive remedy from time which they ought to receive from faith; they have the name of God only in their mouths, but the world is in their hearts. Their passions are strong and obstinate, not subject to sanctified reason. The difficulty they have of being comforted, discovers the necessity of their being afflicted. They need conversion more than consolation; others, who are sincere in faith, yet are apt to faint under troubles, from an error like that of the apostles; when their Lord came upon the waters in a stormy tempestuous night to their assistance, they thought he was a spirit. So they look on God as an enemy, when he comes to sanctify and save them: the sovereign remedy of our sorrows is to correct the judgment of sense by a serious belief of God's promise. Thus we shall reconcile the roughness of his hand with the sweetness of his voice: he calls to us from heaven in the darkest night, "It is I, be not afraid." He corrects us with the heart and hand of a father.

A due consideration of these things will produce a glorified joy in the midst of our sufferings. "Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope." Rom. 15. 4.

SERMON VII.

LUKE XIV. 23.

The Lord said to the servant, compel them to come in, that my house may be full.

OUR blessed Saviour in the days of his humility, among other instances of his admirable condescension, was pleased in his sermons to stoop to the capacity of the hearers, and instruct them in a familiar easy way. The infirm eye of flesh cannot behold spiritual things in their immediate purity and glory, but as shadowed under sensible comparisons. Therefore his excellent goodness made use of parables, to illustrate and explain by representations and patterns borrowed from things common and known, things of a sublimer nature, and more distant from our apprehensions: and by this engaging lively manner to awaken the spirit to consider by what is said, what is signified: and to insinuate into the affections divine truths so pleasingly conveyed to us.

Now of all the parables in the gospel, this of the marriage feast, both in respect of the excellence of the matter, and the manner of expression suitable to our capacity, deserves the serious application of our minds and hearts. I will make some observa-

tions upon it, that may be useful and introductive to the following discourse.

Two general parts are to be considered, in it: viz.

I. The narrative of the preparations, and the persons invited to the feast.

II. The success of the invitation.

In unfolding these generals, I shall consider the substance of the parable, without straining it by far-fetched parallels beyond the intention of our Saviour. It is a curious folly to turn every figure in scripture into an allegory. The parable is the same in substance with that in the 22d chapter of St. Matthew, from the 2d verse to the 15th: that indeed has more of circumstance and magnificence in the relation. The 'certain man that made the feast is there styled a king,' that is, the blessed God; 'and the feast is for the marriage of his Son:' under this figure of a royal marriage is represented the mystical marriage between Christ and his church, and the type is infinitely excelled by the reality. If we consider the persons joined in this divine alliance, the Son of God, of the same nature, of equal and eternal greatness with his Father, to unite himself to sinful miserable creatures in a conjugal relation, the most tender and entire, what an immense distance was to be overcome? What a seeming disparagement was it to him? In order to this it was necessary there should be a conformity of nature between us: he therefore "was made flesh, that we might be one spirit with him:" he assumed our nature in a personal union to the Deity, that he might marry our persons in a spiritual union. He was a Saviour to redeem us, that he might be a husband to enrich us. Astonishing love! The Lord of glory, higher than the heavens, stooped so low as to espouse poor dust: he gave his life for us, and himself to us for ever. What honour and happiness accrue to us by this alliance! the Lord of angels is our husband. His gifts are answerable to his love: he is heir of all things, and endows his church with heaven and earth: the apostle assures believers all things "are yours, and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's." Our communion with him is so perfect, that he discharges us of all the evils that we cannot bear, our sins and the curse due to them, by taking them upon himself, and bestows upon us all the blessings and blessedness we are capable to enjoy, "Wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption."

By the great supper prepared, we are to understand the manifestation of the Messiah, with all the most precious and invaluable benefits purchased and conferred by him upon believers; the pardon of sins, adoption into God's family, the graces and comforts of the Spirit, and eternal glory, the becoming testimonies of his greatness and love.

The prime guests invited to this feast are the Jews, the select people of God, "to whom pertained the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises: whose are the fathers, and of whom concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever." Rom. 9. 4, 5. When other nations were excluded from the alliance of God, his presence and worship was their privilege, and for them this feast was principally intended.

The servants employed in the invitation were, first, Moses and the prophets, inclusively to John the baptist; all 'to whom the oracles of God were committed,' Rom. 3. 2. Deut. 18. and by whom the eternal counsels of his wisdom were declared concerning the Messias. All their prophecies, as so many lines, meet in this centre. Psal. 2. Isa. 40. The other servants were the apostles, who were commanded "to preach the gospel first at Jerusalem." Luke 24. The first order of servants, and the second, both proposed the same Messias, as the object of our faith and love; but the prophets under shadows and figures in the promises, the apostles clearly in the truth and accomplishment. The first invited while the preparations were making; but the evangelical ministers are more earnest and pressing, "Come, for all things are now ready." And in comparing these two periods of time, there is the most shining and sensible evidence of the truth of the christian religion: for the marks of it are clear in the prophecies by their exact references to the accomplishment in the person of Christ; and they are clear in the accomplishment by the correspondence to the prophecies. Who can suspend assent that our redemption by Jesus Christ is the work of divine providence, when the design of it is so exactly delineated in the prophecy?

Thus the unchangeable firmness and stability of God's counsel is the foundation of our faith. The consummation of the marriage will be at the second coming of Christ.

II. The success of the invitation is related, "They all with

one consent began to make excuse. The first said, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go to see it: another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and go to prove them: and another said, I have married a wife, and I cannot come." Luke 14. 18, 19, 20. All the carnal affections are readily and presently conspiring in the refusal. It may seem that the allegations of a purchase and marriage for not coming to a feast were very reasonable: but the feast represents celestial happiness, in comparison of which all the profits and pleasures of this world are but loss and dung: it is evident then, their excuses are strong accusations of their folly and ingratitude: of folly in preferring shadows before substantial felicity, moments before eternity: of ingratitude, in rejecting contumeliously the most gracious and earnest offer of such a happiness. This is spoken of the Jews, who lived in the time of the Son of God's descent for the salvation of men: the love of the world caused them to despise his mean appearance, and neglect the call of humble mercy. Upon their refusal, "the servant came and showed his Lord these things; then the master of the house being angry, said to his servant, go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the Lord said unto the servant, go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say unto you, that none of those men that were bidden, shall taste of my supper." Ver. 21, 22, 23, 24.

The refusers are for ever excluded from the joy of this royal feast, being as unworthy as unwilling to partake of it. This judgment is still visible upon the nation of the Jews, who consent to their progenitors rejecting and condemning the Messias, and will not be convinced of the obstinate imposture that was devised to prevent the belief of his resurrection. But it did not become the wisdom and goodness of God, that such costly preparations should be lost: it was requisite that some persons should actually come to the feast, that is, obey the heavenly call, and receive the gospel; for otherwise the redemption the Son of God so dearly acquired, had been without fruit, he had died in vain, which is directly contrary to the promise of God to him. "I will give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salva-

tion to the ends of the earth." Isa. 4. 9, 6. Accordingly the servant is ordered to bring in the "poor, the lame, and the blind, and to go into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that the house may be filled." These expressions declare the extreme misery of the heathens, who were at that time "without Christ, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world." Ephes. 2. 12.

"Compel them to come in." The papists alledge this text to give colour to their cruelty, in their violent ways of making proselytes to their idolatry. Their convincing arguments are swords, and racks, and gibbets, and fires. If this be a proper method of converting men to religion, the greatest tyrants are the most infallible teachers. The vanity and impiety of the pretence will appear by the considering,

1. It is ridiculous to reason, to use forcible means for such an end: for the understanding is a reasonable faculty, and can only be convinced by instructing reasons. It cannot judge of things but as they appear, nor assent against its judgment. Indeed threatenings and tortures may make men infidels, but not sincere believers: it may make them hypocrites and comedians in religion, but not unfeigned professors. This is abundantly exemplified in France, where the vast number of servile converts have been made by their dragoons, not their doctors.

2. This is most contrary to the practice of our Saviour, and to the spirit of the gospel. The sword that Christ useth in subduing his enemies, and making them willing subjects to his sceptre, "Goes out of his mouth." Rev. 19. 15. His kingdom was introduced into the world by preaching and miracles, by doing good and suffering evil: he opened the way for the gospel not by killing his enemies, but by dying himself, and in his members: the establishing and enlarging his religion are by suitable means, the illumination of men's minds, the persuasion of their wills, the drawing of their affections to embrace it. Accordingly the apostle tells us, "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." 2 Cor. 10. 4, 5. The weapons are suitable to the warfare, and the warfare to the

kingdom, which is spiritual, "not of this world." The using of force to constrain men to embrace the christian religion, is contrary to the love, the goodness, meekness, clemency and benignity, the blessed temper of the gospel plants in the breasts of christians. How severely did our Saviour rebuke the fiery spirit in James and John? Luke 9. 55. "You know not what manner of spirit you are of; the Son of Man came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them." It is contrary to the golden rule given to all his disciples, "What you would have others do to you, do you to them."

But this must be acknowledged, that it is very congruous that the papists make use of the material sword, when 'the sword of the Spirit, the word of God,' strikes through the heart of popery. The doctrine of the mass is a clear contradiction to the scripture, and a notorious derogating from the value and virtue of Christ's death: they say it is an unbloody sacrifice of Christ, propitiatory for the living and the dead: whereas our Saviour was offered up once, the mass is ten thousand times in a day repeated. Christ's sacrifice was with blood, and an unbloody sacrifice is not propitiatory, nor can obtain remission. Where can they find in scripture the religious worship of the saints? They set up an infinite number of intercessors, and rob our Saviour of his glory, as if he were defective either in his compassionate love to us, for whom he mediates, or in his power with God. They prefer his mother before him in dispensing mercy of which sinners have the most need: they represent him as strict and severe, but she is composed of sweetness, he is the Judge, she the Advocate and Saviour; we will leave them to the jealous God.

I shall only observe farther, that many erring sects preserve their allegiance to the divine authority in the scripture, for they do not assume an infallibility to themselves, but mistake the sense of scripture: but the papists by asserting that the authority of scripture depends upon the testimony of their church, that is, the sun borrows its beams from her eyes, and by arrogating an infallibility to it, do in effect renounce homage to the authority of God in his word. And from hence it is that the adherers to that religion are so inconvincible: though sense, reason and scripture discover their doctrines to be plainly impossible. Their doctrine of transubstantiation involves such contradictions as

destroy the essence and end of miracles: their doctrine of the pope's supremacy implies there are two monarchs of one kingdom, two heads of one body, two husbands of one spouse. No errors are more strong and fatal than such as are armed with authority, especially if that authority be esteemed sacred. But to return from this digression, though not impertinent.

"Compel them to come in." The word signifies the use of all constraining motives, and the most earnest entreaties that are congruous to prevail upon those who are invited to a feast. The same word is used Mat. 14. 22. "And Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship;" which certainly was not by violent driving or drawing them, but by his commanding authority. So it is related of the two that were with our Saviour in the journey to Emmaus, that they "constrained him to abide with them:" Luke 24. 29. the constraint was by earnest entreaties, far from force. The same word is used of Peter's compelling the "Gentiles to live after the rites of the Jews:" Gal. 2. 14. that was by his example. Thus the nations were compelled to receive the gospel by the apostles, the ambassadors for Christ, who did ardently, "in season and out of season," pray them in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God. Their doctrine was recommended by the holiness of their lives, and confirmed by the lustre of their miracles. In short, the expression signifies how pleasing it is to God, that those who are invited by the offers of grace in the gospel, should come to Christ to obtain life: and that the invitation shall be effectual in the hearts of those who belong to the election of grace.

The proposition that I shall insist on is this:

It is the great duty of the ministers of Christ to use their best endeavours, to instruct and persuade men to embrace the saving mercies of the gospel.

The commission was immediately given to the apostles, but extends to the end of the world, till the ministration of the gospel shall cease. I will explicate the doctrine in this order.

I. Consider what is implied, the averseness in men from consenting to the terms of salvation offered in the gospel.

II. The means by which they are wrought on, and induced to come to the celestial feast.

III. Prove that it is the greatest duty of the ministers of Christ

to apply themselves with a holy zeal to bring men to partake of the saving mercies revealed in the gospel.

I. There is an averseness implied in the expression, "Compel them to come in." This will be evident by considering, that the world, the flesh, and satan, are enemies in combination against the souls of men, and raise an army of objections against their submitting to the terms of the gospel.

1. The world is the general temptation: the natural world, and the corrupt world, the things and men of the world hinder our coming to Christ.

1st. The natural world, comprising all the creatures in it, was originally very good, both in respect of the things themselves, and their designed use: for they were beneficial to man, in order to his serving and enjoying the blessed God. But since his fall from the state of unstained nature, they are accidentally evil to him. "The creatures are made subject to vanity, not willingly:" Rom. 8. they are perverted from their innocent use, to foment and gratify men's vicious appetites. Therefore the apostle declares, "the whole creation groans and travels in pain, is in a kind of agony ready to faint, not for the labour, but the indignities they suffer." The charge that God fastens upon idolaters, is true against worldly men: "Ye have taken my silver, and my gold, and have carried into your temples my goodly pleasant things." The riches, the pleasures, the greatness and glory of the world are the idols of their heads and hearts. The interposition of the earth darkens their minds, eclipses their esteem of the fruition of God as their only happiness; the love of it alienates and estranges their affections from him, their trust in it slackens their due dependance upon him. From hence it is, that the world, which, made by God, was a fair and bright theatre of his perfections, to raise the thoughts and affections of men with delight and wonder to the blessed Creator, as it is managed by satan, and abused by the lusts of men, "is the shadow of death:" such as some trees cast, that not only intercept the refreshing light of the sun, but shed a malignant contagious influence. Strange alteration!

The world is present and sensible, and makes an easy entrance into the bosoms of men. Their souls are surprised and deceived by the suggestions of the senses, that represent earthly things as

great realities: spiritual and future things are to them but matters of fancy and conceit. The present and succeeding world are like counterbalances; as the one rises, the other sinks in men's opinions. When the world has got possession of them, it commands and captivates all their powers and faculties. All the preaching in the world is in vain, a throng of business or loose diversions causes the neglect of the great salvation. Represent to them the attractive mercies of God, his melting bowels opened in the gospel to all repenting sinners; they are unmoved, frozen in their dregs: remember them, that their bodies are dying every day, and their souls are already dead, and that without sincere coming to Christ they cannot be recovered to the life of grace and glory, it is in vain: tell them, they must shortly appear before the dread Lord of spirits, and be accountable for all things done in this world, and the consequence will be eternal; all is in vain: they have other affairs, other desires, which they regard and pursue; they are lost in the labyrinth of the world, and have no time nor inclination to secure their main interest.

It is further observable, from the excuses alledged in the parable of a purchase, and a marriage, and as it is said in Mat. 22. "That the invited made light of it, one went to his farm, and another to his merchandise;" that those temptations of the world are most persuasive and fatal to men, that seem to be very natural and innocent. For what duty is more clearly natural and reasonable than to make provision of supplies suitable to their condition and state, to their charge and families? It is true, conscience and prudence require that men should be diligent in their callings, for the support and comfort of the present life. 'But the kingdom of heaven, and the righteousness that leads to it, must be sought for in the first place.' The highest valuations, the most inflamed affections, the most vigorous and constant endeavours are due to heaven. Now the minds and faculties of men are limited, and cannot with intense and equal ardency apply themselves to various objects. If the world be the main object of their care and counsel, the vigour of their leading and instrumental faculties will be less free and active for heaven: and from hence it is, that the affairs and engagements of this world, though immediately they do not deprive men of heaven, yet mediately they are destructive to them; for they lessen their esteem, cool their affections, slack their endeavours to

obtain it: they oppress their spirits, engross their time, that they have no leisure to "work out their own salvation:" they make them receptive of many temptations, which wound their souls to death for ever. The constant spring of the sins and misery of men is from hence, they have forgot the regular use of the creatures, as means and motives of their ascending to God; they understand not the rule of wisdom, to make temporal things subordinate to eternal; they have lost the happy temper of not totally declining the world, nor of eager embracing it. In short, they would enjoy the world, and only use God in their exigencies. It is therefore inculcated in scripture, "That the friends of the world are the enemies of God, and that the love of the world is inconsistent with the love of the Father." It is a most dangerous sin, being so hardly discernible, and hardly cured: for the more appearance there is of reason and the less of sensuality in a sin, the more it insinuates and prevails. We usually judge of sins by the foulness of the external act, but the guilt of it principally arises from its inward contrariety to God. The love of the world dethrones God in the hearts of men: other sins dishonour him in breaking his laws, this reproaches him as less worthy of our respects. When it has free dominion, it will as certainly, though silently, destroy the souls of those who are of a fair reputation in the eyes of men, as the riots of notorious sinners will be their ruin.

2dly. The corrupt world, those who are styled the "children of this world," by their example, and by their opposition, are obstacles in the way to heaven.

(1.) By example: for the broad way is beaten by the multitude, and few strive "to enter in at the strait gate that leads to eternal life." Now men easily receive the impression of example. Of this there is palpable evidence; for when sins are common, the numbers of the guilty diminish the sense and shame of the guilt. But if conscience be sometimes unquiet, they smother the sparks of conviction in their breasts, and make a resolute reckoning they shall be in no worse condition than others. Miserable comfort! as if one tortured on a rack could receive any mitigation of his pains, by the sight of many others suffering the same torture. So contagious are the fashions and manners of the world, that a principal end of our Saviour's death was to "deliver us from this present evil world:" Gal. 1. that is,

not from the place, but from the depraved state, and sinful practices of the men of the world. The apostle Peter remembers believers, "Ye know that ye are not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation, received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." 1 Pet. 1. So deep was the pollution, it could only be washed out in that precious fountain. The principles and ways of the world have a mighty influence to blind and harden men in conformity to them. The heathen idolatries and impurities were continued so long in the world, being commended and established by public custom: and accordingly the apostle tells the Ephesians, "they in time past walked according to the course of this world."

Now to apply this more closely to the present subject: it is visible by the conversation of men in the world, that their aims, their appetites, their endeavours are terminated in the world: their souls cleave to it, the train and tendency of their actions leads to it. A superficial tincture of religion, a complimental visit to God sometimes in public worship, contents the most; but their thoughts, their time and strength are spent to obtain and enjoy the present world; for it is esteemed their main interest, and heaven is only sought by the by, as an accession to their felicity. Now we usually approve and effect things according to common opinions and practice, though unreasonable and exorbitant. The psalmist speaking of the gathering uncertain riches, observes, "this their way is their folly, yet their posterity approve their sayings:" Psal. 49. they imitate the folly of their progenitors, though fatal to them. Men are vain in their minds, and secure in their sins, by conformity to the numerous examples that encompass them. Nay, a regenerate man by conversing with the unregenerate world, is in danger to be tainted in his judgment, and to be irregular in his affections to earthly things: he is apt to conceive so highly, and to frame such glorious and goodly ideas of worldly excellencies, that his desires are inflamed to attain them, and proportionably he is chilled and controlled in the alacrity and vigour of his endeavours after heavenly things. Thus as a fresh water river by its nearness to the sea has a brackish taste; so even the citizens of heaven are prone to be earthly minded, by their society with the

children of this world. It is the wise and earnest advice of the apostle, "be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." The corruption of the world has deeply seized upon us since to purge it away; a man must be melted anew and transformed into another creature. So difficult it is for a carnal man to resist the united force and potent sway of corrupt nature and custom.

(2.) By opposing those who sincerely comply with the heavenly call, either by scorn and derision, or violence and persecution. Human nature is very sensible of disparaging reflections, and it is one of the spiteful arts of satan to make use of his instruments to deride serious religion out of the world. It is equally profane and pernicious to turn into raillery and wild mirth the impieties and impurities of the wicked, and the holiness that shines in the lives of excellent saints: for the "making a mock of sin," takes away the just horror and detestation of it; and the scurrilous vilifying of holiness, takes away the veneration and high respect that is due to it. Carnal men who live in pleasures, without restraint of their licentious appetites, upbraided by the holy and heavenly conversation of sincere christians, cannot with patience suffer others to practise what they neglect; and to countenance their own looseness, and from revenge, scurrilously abuse whom they will not imitate. "Pure and undefiled religion" is the game that winged wits fly at. He that avoids the appearance and approach of sin, that "strives to be holy as God is holy in all manner of conversation," is the mark wherein their poisoned arrows are fastened. "The just upright man is laughed to scorn." Job 12. 4. Nay, even dull wretches will set up for wits, and attempt by their insipid jests, and thread-bare fooleries to abuse the saints. But all the bitter sarcasms that are darted upon religion, are infinitely more hurtful to the despisers than the despised. It argues a prodigious depravation of mind in those who take a perverse delight in scorning holiness, the glorious likeness of God in man: such in the account of scripture are the worst sinners, the most forlorn wretches, whose condition is dreadful, if not desperate.

This scornful exposing religion to make men ashamed of it, is most successful upon the dispositions of young persons, and those who are of higher birth and rank in the world. Youth is

the blushing age, and has a tenderness of face, that cannot bear the prints of disgrace. If one in his early age begins to breathe the life of holiness, if he abstains from fleshly lusts that war against the soul, he is represented as fondly nice, and ridiculously scrupulous: no less than the special grace of God is necessary to fortify his holy resolutions, and make him superior to the scorns of the wicked.

The honourable are fearful of disgrace, and more tender of their reputation, than others, being in a greater light, and exposed to more eyes and observations. If one of noble quality renounces the vanities and enticements of the world, "makes the fear of the Lord his treasure;" if he zealously endeavours to be more distinguished from others by his eminent virtues, than by the splendour of his condition, he is scornfully traduced as a melancholy fop, as a low spirit: as if constancy in devotion, and the practice of mortification were a descent from his dignity, and cast a dark sad shade upon his honour. Thus the vain perverted world vilifies that holiness in men, which the blessed angels adore in God. Isa. 6.

But alas, how many that had serious inclinations to be religious, and were entered into the way of life, have been cooled and checked in their first fervours: they could not firmly sustain reproach, and endure conflicts with the passion of shame, therefore returned to the course of the world, and with it have perished to eternity. We read of the Israelites after their coming out of Egypt, they met in the way with Amalec, who "feared not God, and smote the feeble, and faint, and weary of them:" Deut. 25. 17, 18, 19. therefore the Lord strictly charged them to blot "out the memory of Amalec from under heaven." In this type, profane scorners, that discourage beginners in religion, may see their doom.

To conclude this first general, I shall observe, the parable represents to us, that those who were first invited, "not only made light of it, but entreated spitefully the servants, and slew them." Matt. 22. Their neglect of the gracious invitation, was like the sleep of one oppressed with the fumes of wine, that does not hear a message sent to him: their cruel rage against those who invited them, was like the awaking of a distracted person, who hearing the voice that calls him, and by an error of judgment mistaking what is said, in fury snatches his sword,

and destroys those about him. Wicked men are of satan's society: he "was a murderer from the beginning," and hates the word of life. As soon as our Saviour was born, and pointed out by a new star in heaven, there was a design to destroy him. It is true, the subtle tempter does not at first inspire men with rage against the gospel: but as in the art of dying, some colours are preparatory for others, the cloth is first dipped in blue before it takes a black; so by several degrees in sinning he brings them to extreme wickedness. Thus the neglect of the gospel makes way for the contempt of those who bring it; and contempt proceeds to hatred, and hatred sometimes produces mischievous and deadly effects. Now the fear of temporal evils, especially if extreme, to which men are open and obnoxious for the gospel, will hinder them from embracing it, or cause them to forsake it, if they are not supernaturally enlightened and confirmed, by "the Spirit of power and love, and of a sound mind." 2 Tim. 1.

SERMON VIII.

LUKE XIV. 23.

The Lord said to the servant, compel them to come in, that my house may be full.

I PROCEED to the second hinderance of men's rejecting the call of the gospel. The flesh, that in the language of the scripture signifies the corrupt nature, and inbred inclinations of men to forbidden things, obstruct their coming to Christ. The corrupt nature is called flesh, not only as that is a term of vilifying, for the original and resolution of flesh is into the dust, but partly with respect to its propagation, and chiefly in that the usual attractive and defiling objects of men's thoughts and desires are carnal, and are enjoyed by the carnal faculties. Our minds and affections are coloured and qualified, distinguished and denominated from the objects about which they are conversant. This corruption is spread through all the faculties of the soul: the mind is carnal in its principles and acts, "in opposition to the spirit of the mind renewed by grace:" the will and affections are depraved. "Whatever is born of the flesh is flesh." The apostle fully expresses this corruption: he saith, "the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God;" 1 Cor. 2. 14.

that implies the stubborn averseness in the will and affections from spiritual things: "for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." The natural mind is indisposed and incapable of knowing supernatural things in their reality and goodness, so as to ravish the will into compliance, till it is purified and spiritualized by the Holy Spirit. The same apostle tells us, that "the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither can be." Rom. 8. As the lusts of the flesh are opposite to the law of God, so the wisdom of the flesh is to the gospel.

This corrupt nature makes the world such a dangerous snare to men: for it binds their minds so as not to see the dross of earthly things, and the glory of heavenly. St. John expresses the tempting objects of the world by the vicious affections that are drawn out and fastened upon them. "All that is in the world is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life;" for the lusts of men put a gloss upon them, and make them pernicious. The poison is not in the flowers but in the spider, that turns the extraction from them into its own nourishment. Accordingly St. Peter speaks of the "corruption in the world through lust." 2 Pet. 1. The vain heart is more deceitful than the vain world: for not only reason that instructs the wise, but experience that instructs fools, affords sufficient conviction, that all things here below "are vanity and vexation:" there is none so low, none so exalted in the world, but find it so. By tasting a sprig of wormwood, the bitterness is perceived as truly as by drinking a strong infusion of it. The world with all its varieties is a multiplied and perpetuated vanity; it affords no solid satisfaction; the setting down a thousand cyphers makes no sum. But the carnal heart is so enchanted with the false lustre and seeming pleasures of the world, that by changing one vanity for another, it seeks and expects satisfaction. This verifies the observation of the wise preacher, "the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their hearts while they live, and after that they go down to the dead." Eccles. 9. 3. What a prodigy of madness is it for men to catch at a shadow of happiness, to seek for that which they are uncertain to find; and if they do find, they are certain to lose; and to neglect substantial felicity, which if they sincerely seek, they shall obtain, and if they obtain, they shall enjoy for ever!

But that it may be more evident "that the flesh with its affections and lusts," does powerfully interpose to hinder men from embracing the gospel, I will particularly consider its opposition to the supernatural doctrines revealed in the gospel, the objects of faith; to the holy precepts of it, the rule of obedience; to the spiritual rewards commended to our choice.

1. The great mystery of godliness, is the incarnate Son of God, who by an ignominious and accursed death purchased a glorious blessed life for his people: 1 Cor. 1. this doctrine is accounted foolishness, and rejected by the proud unrenewed mind. The gospel is "styled the word of faith:" Rom. 10. 8. it is conveyed to the soul with authority and efficacy by faith. As faith in Christ was required of the sick, and blind, and lame, that his healing virtue might rest on them; Mat. 9. 28. so the belief of the divinity of his person and doctrine, is the first vital qualification, that makes us capable of spiritual healing. Infidelity stops the fountain of grace.

The apostle saith, the "word preached did not profit them that heard it, not being mixed with faith." Now although the light of the gospel be so clear and convincing that the sincere considering mind cannot suspend its assent to it, yet the carnal mind stained with prejudices and vicious affections, will not admit it. "An evil heart is the principal cause of unbelief."

The Jews from pride, vain glory, and the love of the world, rejected the Son of God, though all the characters of the Messias were conspicuous in him: he did not come with visible glory and observation, according to their expectations and desires; they "saw no form nor comeliness in him, and did not believe the report concerning him;" they were scandalized at his parentage and mean condition: he discovered their beloved sins, and sharply reproved the reigning vices among them, which made his person and his preaching so odious to them.

Our Saviour tells us, "that light was come into the world; and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil." The prejudice of their passions was so strong, that they rejected the saving truths of the gospel, and believed damnable delusions.

Now the same roots of offence are in the hearts of men against the gospel. Such a cloud arises from the stream of carnal lusts darkening the understanding, that it cannot discover truths so

high as the mysterious doctrines of Christ. Love in the heart is requisite as well as light in the mind, to know spiritual things: obedience to the will of God is the best preparative to believe his word. Our Saviour justly taxed the pharisees, "they did not repent, that they might believe." Men are averse from receiving those doctrines that condemn their lusts; and are infidels that they may be freely wicked, that the shadow of repentance may not disturb them. It is said of atheistical scorners, "they are willingly ignorant:" 2 Pet. 3. 5. the corrupt will rules imperiously, and turns the thoughts from those arguments, which if duly considered, reason with a strong hand would constrain them to acknowledge there is a righteous God who has authority to command, and power to punish those who rebel against his laws.

It is true, they pretend to offer something for a more colourable denial of supernatural revelation: but the perverseness of infidelity appears through all their pretences. Some object against the sublimity of the doctrines of the gospel. It was the scornful expression of one, this is like the "peace of God that passes all understanding." As if the reality of things depended upon the conception and capacity of the human mind, and divine truths were impossible because incomprehensible. Such foolish pride obstructs the reception of divine truths; and from hence humble christians are despised as led by a blind belief. Others are offended at the simplicity of the revealing them. The doctrines are so high they cannot reach unto, the manner of conveying them is so low they will not stoop to. But it is evident these arguings are not from the reason but the lusts of men. For the rare accord of the matter and manner of the gospel-revelation is a sensible character of its descent from God: the doctrine is high and bright, of an extraordinary elevation; the delivery of it is easy and familiar, since it is for the instruction and salvation of men; and accordingly the divine wisdom has made an exact temperament of these things. Briefly, the corrupt affections pervert the will to reject the gospel, and the perverted will influences the understanding to disapprove it. Nay, carnal lusts force men against their light, (as the Jews did Pilate to condemn the person of Christ) to condemn his doctrine.

There are many in this degenerate age, who although they dare not publicly own the defiled and abhorred name of infidels,

yet among their companions employ their wit to dispute and deride the most sublime and sacred truths out of the world. Their faces are full of death, the tokens of reprobation are visible upon them. The issue will discover them to be the wretched examples of that fearful rule. Those who are destined to final ruin are infatuated.

Others are believers in profession and their own conceit, but infidels in practice. Their faith is but a vain opinion, a loose assent to the christian doctrine, because it is the religion of the country, but with our radication and establishment. This is evident, considering that the doctrines of the gospel are not merely intellectual, the objects of theory and speculation, but moral and practical, the objects of our choice and seeking: "this is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ is come into the world to save sinners." Accordingly the unfeigned belief of them is seated not only in the mind, but in the heart, and is correspondent to the infallible truth and transcendent goodness of the thing revealed: they make such an impression on the soul, that the value of them is above life, and whatever comes in competition is with despising disdain rejected. But when men seldom remember and little regard eternal things, how specious soever the profession is, can there be a reasonable belief of their words against their works? Therefore in the language of the scripture, "all that do not first seek the kingdom of heaven, and the righteousness thereof, are unbelievers; it being morally impossible that men should sincerely believe, and have a due apprehension of it, but it must be the great design of their souls, and the main business of their lives to obtain it.

2. Security is the constant effect of infidelity, and hardens men in their sins, and the neglect of salvation so dearly purchased, and graciously offered to them in the gospel. Direct infidels set "their mouth against heaven," and defy the furnace of hell. They are blindly bold, and fearless of that judgment that makes the devils tremble. Others, though not open and palpable infidels, are in a dead calm, not sensible of their sins, and have slight apprehensions of their great danger: infidelity lies at the bottom of their security. As the Egyptians in the thick darkness that covered the land, "moved not from their places;" so many in ignorant darkness, sit down and are at rest, careless of the Saviour that "can deliver from the wrath to come." Only

those who have strong apprehensions of evils imminent and destructive, will fly to Christ as a sanctuary and shelter, and submit to his terms of saving them.

Secondly. The corrupt nature will not submit to the sanctity and purity of the gospel. The forecited scripture tells us, the "carnal mind is enmity against God:" and that enmity is armed with many strong lusts opposing his law. The principal cause of rejecting the gospel is common to all, "we will not have this man to reign over us." Luke 19. 14. It is observable, that as holiness is that attribute wherein God doth most excel, and men are most defective; so the corrupt will is most opposite to it. The justice and power of God in some cases men do approve and apply themselves to: if injuriously accused or oppressed, they desire his justice to vindicate their innocence, and revenge their wrongs: if in distress and exigencies they pray that his powerful providence may regard and relieve them: but they are extremely averse from his holiness shining in his laws, which excites his justice and power to punish those who rebel against it. They are ready to say to Christ, what the rebellious Israelites said to Rehoboam, "thy father made our yoke grievous: now therefore make thou the grievous service of thy father, and his heavy yoke which he put upon us, lighter, and we will serve thee." 1 Kings 12. 4. They will measure out the scantling of their obedience, how far he shall rule, and farther they will not yield. But our Saviour declares, "I am not come to destroy the law, but to fulfil it." Mat. 5. It is true, the gospel is a covenant of grace, a sovereign composition of precious promises of recovering grace, and pardoning mercy; but it is also a law, and "enjoins repentance towards God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. As without compensation to the justice, so without conformity to the holiness of God, we can never be restored to his favour, and enjoy him as our felicity.

Our Saviour prescribes this indispensable rule to his disciples, "if any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me." This is a comprehensive fundamental duty, and the natural man has a strong reluctancy to every part of it.

1. Self-dependance upon our own virtues and duties for the obtaining the favour of God, and the eternal reward, is very natural to men: it was the condition of the first covenant, to which

they cleave. Men of a fair conversation, and unblemished in the eyes of the world, have some sparks of the pharisee in them, who justified himself, that he was no extortioner, nor unjust, nor an adulterer, nor as the profane publican; and that he fasted and paid tithes. Upon such reasons many presume of the goodness and safety of their spiritual state: they take pride and content in themselves, in their moral goodness, and do not feel the want of a Saviour, nor apply themselves with humble mournful affections to him for reconciliation to God. Others think by the worthiness of their works to compensate for the unworthiness of their sins, to commute one duty for another, and balance their accounts with heaven, not considering that if their works were perfectly good, they are but the performance of their duty, if they had never sinned. It was one great obstruction that hindered the Jews from receiving the gospel: "they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, did not submit themselves to the righteousness of God." Rom. 10. 3. One of a high spirit will rather wear a mean garment of his own, than a rich livery, the mark of servile dependance. Pride resists grace, and grace resists pride. The law of faith requires us to renounce not only our unrighteousness, but our righteousness, even the most excellent graces and the fruits of them, in comparison of Christ, and as a foundation of obtaining the pardon of sin, and salvation for ever. Our righteousness is defective and defiled, and cannot endure the trial of God's enlightening tribunal. All our doings and sufferings cannot expiate the least sin; we must only rely upon the Lord our righteousness, to reconcile us to God, and that we may stand in judgment. "He was made sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him," 2 Cor. 5. 21. not in ourselves.

How hard it is to awaken men out of the pharisaical dream of their own righteousness, Luke 16. is evident both in the doctrine and practice of those of the Roman communion. They assert the formal cause of our justification in the sight of God is our inherent holiness: they blaspheme the imputed righteousness of Christ as a fantastic apprehension: they declare that good works have the merit of congruity and condignity to eternal life: and that by penance, satisfaction is paid to God for their sins, as if there were a proportion between the one and

the other. They succeed the pharisees in their proud and stubborn resistance of the gospel. And among other carnal motives that fasten men in that corrupt religion, these have a special force, as quieting conscience, and gratifying their lusts, that they can make compensation for their offences against God, and that the absolution of a priest seals their pardon: thus being clear, they may begin a new score, and return to their old lusts with new affections.

2. As self implies the flesh with its affections and lusts, so self-denial, and sin-denial are of the same extent. The whole body of corruption with all the parts of it, even the dearest, the most tender and most cherished by carnal men must be mortified. Severe restraints are laid upon the desiring and the angry appetites, the springs of all the sins and miseries in the world. We are strictly commanded to pluck "out the right eye, and to cut off the right hand," Mat. 5. Mark 9. upon the most fearful penalties, the suffering torments insupportable and everlasting. The gospel has the perfections of a rule, it is clear and complete in the direction of our duty. "It teaches us to deny all ungodliness, and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously and godly in this world." Tit. 2. Now carnal men are apt to say with the Capernaites, "This is an hard saying." John 6. 64. Every one has a peculiar favourite lust, the sin of his complexion, or of the country wherein he lives, which if you pluck out of their bosoms, they will fly in your face. Men willingly enough hear reproofs against sins to which they are disinclined; but if directed against their own sins, whether of pleasure or profit, they will scorn the reproof, and storm at the reprover. They will perform some duties that are consistent with their carnal ease and interest, but obstinately stick at others. Herod is a notorious instance of this: it is related "he heard John Baptist gladly, and observed him; and when he heard him, he did many things;" Mark 6. 20. but his incestuous affection made him prefer a filthy harlot before the pure law of God.

One indulged lust captivates the soul, and keeps it under the power of satan. If one leg of a bird be catched in a net, it is as surely held as if its whole body were entangled. One lust separates from Christ, and is a bar against our entrance into heaven, for Christ is the only way to it. The word of God is "sharper than a two-edged sword;" but carnal men will interpose their

souls between their tender lusts and the word, and receive its deadly strokes to spare them. The Lord Christ tells the Jews, "Ye will not come to me that ye may have life:" John 5. they would readily embrace a Saviour that would allow the pleasures of sin, and free them from the punishment; but their wills were so strongly engaged, they would suffer no divorce from their beloved lusts: they chose hell with sin, rather than heaven with holiness.

3. The denial of self includes all that in the order of nature belongs to us: life, and all the supports, the comforts, the ornaments and endearments of it; the sweetest relations, father and mother, brother and sister, wife and children, the richest possessions, houses and land, must be always parted with, in the preparations of our heart, and resolutions of our wills, and actually, rather than desert our duty. Such a supremacy of affection is required by our Saviour, that suspends the operation of our love upon all inferior things, when they are in competition with his interest and glory. This command binds all without exemption: therefore he directs his followers to be armed with expectation of hard entertainment in the world. Now this precept seems so severe to carnal men, that no motives can reconcile their affections to it. If they are spoiled of the advantages, and deprived of the pleasures of this world, they are ready to complain as Micah to them who robbed him of his image and teraphim, "You take away my gods." As if the Son of God were such a poor or illiberal rewarder, either defective in power or love, that they should be losers for his sake.

Thirdly; The promised rewards of the gospel have no effective force upon the carnal mind, and affections. It is true, the gospel has opened heaven, and "brought life and immortality to light;" a state of entire endless joy in the presence of God. Is it possible that men should be indifferent and careless of their final happiness? It is almost equally difficult to induce men to believe and choose the favour and fruition of God, as their only felicity, as to convince them they do not believe and choose it. But their actions declare their choice, and their choice declares their esteem: for if his favour were esteemed an invaluable treasure, it would be the chief object of their desires; they would not forfeit it for all the world: it is therefore evident that the choosing the pleasures of sin, and the profits of the world, is the

direct despising the favour of God. And the account of it is clear: for though heaven be a state of eternal and inexpressible blessedness, yet it is future and spiritual: it makes but a weak impression upon their minds, and is unsuitable to their affections. Carnal men have but an imaginary representation of the world to come, and their assent to it is overshadowed and eclipsed by the present world with its advantages and pleasures; they cannot relish a happiness purely spiritual. It is not the goodness of the object, but the inclination of the heart that makes it desirable. The wise philosopher observes, 'That such as the radicated disposition and habit of a man is, such will the end appear to him.' Therefore a supernatural spiritual good cannot appear to a sensual man so attractive, as to be chosen as his felicity. Only "the pure in heart can see God," and love him, and enjoy him in his amiable excellencies: the unrenewed have no uncertain nor satisfying notions of the happiness that his presence diffuses among the blessed above. This will be discoursed of more particularly under another head.

Fourthly; Satan has a great agency in men's opposition to the gospel, and their neglect of salvation. His title, the tempter, implies his constant practice. It is true, he cannot hurt us against our wills; the enemy without could not surprise us, if the traitor within, the corrupt nature, did not give him admittance; he cannot immediately work upon the will, nor discern the mind; without our consent he cannot obtain a conquest over us; therefore his prevailing temptations do not disculpate sinners that yield to them: he rules only in the children of disobedience, they are his voluntary slaves; but he has a strange power in the minds and hearts of men by his managing tempting objects. The world makes an impression upon our lower faculties, and he improves the impression, and excites corrupt desires. As the operations of the Holy Spirit in believers are secret, but stronger than the influence of the stars: so the workings of satan are in the wicked secret but powerful. I will first consider the motives that urge him to be so active and ardent in hindering the success of the gospel for the salvation of our souls. 2. His methods and wiles for that end. The motives are,

1. His eternal enmity to God: for being under a doom never to be reversed, his malice is always raging and working to dishonour and displease the Righteous Judge. He "sinned from

the beginning," it is his unwearied and uninterrupted work. Men in complying with his temptations, are swayed and carried by the bias of their lusts; some are bribed by profit, others allured by pleasure: but his great end is, that the law of God may be violated, his majesty despised, and his glory obscured. As in a rebellious insurrection, the multitude are engaged, some for spoil, others for private respects, but the design of the leader is to dethrone the king, and usurp his sceptre. Satan's opposition against God is more fierce and steadfast than of the most resolved rebels that trample upon the divine law every day: they do more accomplish his will than their own, which will be the occasion and matter of his insulting scorn, and furious upbraiding them hereafter. Briefly, he loves sin for sin's sake, as it is an affront and provocation of the divine majesty, and is more pleased in the sins of men than in their everlasting damnation, because the holy and righteous Lawgiver is dishonoured by their sins, and glorified in their punishment.

2. His old enmity and hatred against the souls of men. It is another hell to him, to see them restored to the favour of God, and his glorious image re-engraven on them. He is a jealous jailor, and if possible will not loose any of his captives. Being condemned to everlasting burnings, he will make them feel his fire.

The scripture represents him as a strong and subtile adversary: "a roaring lion that goes about seeking whom he may devour, and the old serpent." His enmity is universal, his diligence is equal to his malice, and his malice whets his invention to lay such trains as may be destructive to them. His strength does chiefly lie in his subtilty. If men could see him in his native shape of darkness, an infernal fiend, the most cursed creature, or what he is relatively to them, "a liar and a murderer from the beginning," how would they flee with horror from his temptations? but he does not awake sinners, and then wound them; he is not seen till felt, nor discovered till he has fastened his stings in their souls. He spreads his snares in the dark; and when their spiritual senses are locked in a midnight sleep, he destroys them.

Secondly; His methods and wiles for this end are various.

1. He blinds the minds of men, and hardens them in unbelief. This was his first and successful temptation, and is the pattern

that he still follows. He told the woman "she should not die;" and the restraint of fear being taken away, the pleasure of taste and curiosity soon prevailed with her to eat the forbidden fruit. The apostle gives this account of men's rejecting the truths of the gospel: "If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them who believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." His principal design is to increase the natural infidelity in the minds of men, who are so governed by sense, that in matters of faith they require the evidence of sense: for he knows the powerful efficacy of the divine doctrine where it is believed. Faith enters into the conscience, opens the heart, commands and captivates the will and affections, and brings the most stubborn sinners from the kingdom of satan into the kingdom of Christ. "He is in them," possesses all their faculties, and by that advantage works effectually. He has the monarchy of their minds, and diverts their thoughts from pondering the arguments that would turn their judgments, and induce the belief of the gospel: he excites those carnal affections that blind the mind: he enchants men with enticing sensual objects, that they neither can nor will believe what is contrary to their lusts. Reason, conscience, faith, whereby men are primarily and chiefly distinguished from the brutes, are sacrificed to the prince of darkness. Then they are securely his own: for the most precious promises have no attractive influence upon those in whom there is reigning infidelity: the sharpest threatenings cannot pierce through the armour of obstinacy.

2. The most that refuse the offer of grace in the gospel, are not absolute infidels; therefore the tempter tries other ways to ruin them. He observes the dispositions and circumstances of men, and presents such temptations whereby they are most likely to be taken and held in his snares. Although human nature be wholly depraved, yet all men are not cast in the same mould: they are distinguished by their various aspects, constitutions, desires, and conditions of life, and are not wrought on by the same motives. The tempter by his natural sagacity and experience (he is styled the old serpent) has exact knowledge in the art of discerning men. Sometimes sudden passions are painted in the countenance, and he takes particular advantage to strike

in with them. But his universal method is to present the fittest baits to the natural inclinations, and habitual dispositions of men: he knows the faction within will readily open to his call. The sanguine are soft and dissolute, and are easily drawn to exorbitant pleasures: the melancholy are inclined to discontent, sorrow, impatience, despair: those who have active restless spirits, are taken with the advantages of the world. The muddy mind is easily stirred by the offer of gain: the voluptuous mind is strongly allured by sensual delights: the aspiring mind is incensed by the prospect of honour. Now though the tempter be a spirit, and not capable of those sins which are acted by the sensible faculties, yet not only spiritual sins, pride, envy, malignity, and the like, but fleshly lusts, even the foulest actions are from his incitations. He was not only a proud spirit, but an unclean spirit in David. 2 Chron. He was a covetous spirit in Judas: an hypocritical spirit in Ananias: satan put it into his heart to detain part of the price, and lie to the Holy Ghost. He presents the temptation, and suggests motives to embrace it. He brings the fuel, enticing objects, and inspires the flame, ardent desires to them. If burning lusts begin to cool, and raging corruptions are controlled by the threatening of the word, and the terrors of conscience, he will blow them up again. Now any reigning lust is a viceroy of satan's, and keeps possession for him, and consequently excludes the Son of God from admission into the heart.

3. He persuades men that religion in its power and strictness is not necessary: the abstaining from enormous crimes, and the performance of some outward service will be available for salvation. Hell is the portion of the devil and his children, and none are of his race but incarnate devils, unclean spirits in brutish bodies. He makes use of carnal men, under the pretence of friendship to persuade those who feel the restraints of conscience, to be less tender and vigilant, by telling them, this strictness is superfluous, it will spoil you, make you unsociable and odious: the wise and learned that think to go to heaven with the first, take a greater liberty: they will say moderation is a virtue, and by the pretence of temper cherish the loathsome distemper of lukewarmness, that is as fatal as a deadly coldness. The tempter will permit men to make use of religion as a medicine, a little in fainting fits, to relieve and recover them, but not as

their daily food: not to be their diligent and constant practice. The crafty serpent will abuse the words of the Holy Spirit, "be not righteous over much." As Judas said of the precious ointment poured upon our Saviour, "why was this waste?" so carnal men are apt to say, why these severe restraints from satisfying the natural appetites? Why such circumspection in our walking? Why keep the Lord's day so religiously? Is it not enough to hear the sermons? May we not afterwards unbend, and enjoy free society, and recreate ourselves with carnal contentments? They do not believe that God is so strict in his commands, nor will be so exact in requiring an account for them: fond creatures to entertain such carnal conceits of God, to think him like themselves. They are apt to say, the ministers will fetter them all by imaginative rules of holiness unprescribed in the scriptures. For men would fain have the light, and the law that regulates them, to be suitable to their appetites and actions. But are we not commanded to imitate and honour our pattern, "to be holy as our heavenly Father is holy, in all manner of conversation?" Are we not enjoined to "work out our own salvation with fear and trembling; to cleanse ourselves from all pollutions of flesh and spirit, and to perfect holiness in the fear of God: to follow holiness with the most zealous and unsatisfied desires," that, if it were possible, we might anticipate heaven on earth? Can there be any excuse for neglecting these holy duties?

There are none more dangerously deceived than those that think they are holy enough, and make no question of the favour of God and their final happiness. They condemn profane outrageous sinners; those who visibly come short of them, they think will fall short of salvation; but to excel them, they think is a needless preciseness, a pride of singularity, a mask of hypocrisy. It is one of satan's arts to conceal the good that is in the saints, that they may condemn themselves, and to conceal the evil that is in the unregenerate, that they may flatter themselves. How many fall as deep as hell from such high hopes? for he that does not seriously desire and endeavour to be renewed into the unspotted image of God, was never truly renewed.

SERMON IX.

LUKE XIV. 23.

The Lord said to the servant, compel them to come in, that my house may be full.

3dly. IF conscience be not seared and senseless, but awakens sinners to reflect upon their condition, and to seek for the pardoning mercy of God, he deceives them with false notions of faith and repentance, and hinders their entire compliance with the terms of mercy offered in the gospel. Final unbelief and impenitence utterly exclude men from salvation: for the death of Christ was not appointed to be a sacrifice for those sins. There is no salvation to be obtained without the remission of sin, no remission without the blood of Christ, no application of that precious blood without faith. This is the vital qualification required in all justified persons: for it has a peculiar efficiency in receiving Christ and pardon, and ascribes the glory of it entirely to the mercy of God and merits of Christ. It is said, "to as many as received him, he gave power to become the sons of God, to those who believed on his name." John 1. 12. Receiving is relative to God's offer of Christ to the condemned and miserable, and implies the taking him in all the essentials of his

office; as a prophet, to instruct us in our duty and happiness by his word and spirit; as a priest, to atone the divine displeasure by his propitiation and intercession; as a king, to govern us by his law, and to bestow spiritual and eternal blessings on us. Faith receives Christ as a kingly priest, and a saving prince; he is styled a "Priest upon a throne, a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins." He purchased the forgiveness of sins as a priest by his sufferings on the cross, and pardons as a king upon the throne: from hence it necessarily follows, that faith receives pardon from him in that relation wherein he procured it, and confers it. The apostle declares, "he died for our sins, and rose again for our justification," and thereby redeemed us, and acquired a dominion over us: then it is clear and consequent, that saving faith receives him for all those uses for which God did appoint him; and accordingly "purifies the heart, overcomes the world, works by love:" and love is the spring and substance of every duty, the "fulfilling of the law." Now carnal men are deceived in this imagination, that the single act of resting upon Christ is sufficient to entitle them to the promise of salvation to all that believe in him: they desire an interest in Christ, to quiet their consciences; and the world, to satisfy their affections. They will rest on him as a Redeemer, but reject him as a Lord: they would enjoy his salvation, but will not endure his dominion: they will come to partake of the festival entertainment, the pardon of their sins, but not for the honour of the bridegroom. As if the gospel were a free charter to sin, and gave an impure indulgence to the vicious affections; which is as inconsistent with it, as the darkness of the night with noon-day in the same hemisphere: for then it would foil itself, and frustrate its own end. Our Saviour first redeems from sin, "from the vain conversation," 1 Pet. 1. 18. then from hell. There can be no regular saving trust on his death, without an unfeigned resolution to live within the compass of his laws. "He is the Author of eternal salvation to all that obey him." It is a blasphemous conceit, that he will save men with their sins. If they will die in such a pleasing dream, who can prevent it?

2. Men are miserably deceived about repentance. This is indispensably required not only by the command, but as a disposition that qualifies the sinner for pardoning mercy. For al-

though the majesty and supremacy of God be illustriously visible in pardoning sinners, and it is most evident that his authority is above the rigour of the law, and his mercy is infinitely free; yet they are always exercised correspondently to his essential and unchangeable perfections, his ruling wisdom, his unspotted holiness, and governing justice: from hence it follows that a sinner remaining in the love, and under the power of his sins, is not a capable object of pardoning mercy. Who can conceive that a wise prince should send forth a proclamation of pardon to rebels, without their consent to return to their allegiance? John the Baptist, the forerunner of the rising Sun of Righteousness, the morning star of the gospel, preached the "baptism of repentance for the remission of sins." Even our Saviour begins his preaching the gospel with this, "repent ye, and believe the gospel." St. Peter directed those who were anxious and inquiring about their salvation, "repent, and be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins." He repeats this doctrine in Acts 3. 19. "repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord." And he gives testimony of the resurrection of Christ, "him hath God exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." According to this unalterable tenour of the gospel, repentance is the condition that qualifies the subject, without which no man is pardoned. Some are strangely scrupulous of using this word *condition*, though it is authorized by the full current of the reformed divines, and I know none more convenient to express the necessity of it in a pardoned person. Our Saviour tells his disciples, "ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you:" are not those words a conditional assertion, upon what terms they possess that inestimable privilege of being his friends? Thus when God invites men to come out from the pollutions of the world, and to "touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you, and I will be your father, and you shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty:" are not these conditional promises? And upon the performance of the terms, the blessing will be bestowed, and not otherwise.

It is objected, that the asserting repentance to be the condition of pardon, lessens the grace of the gospel: but this is a

great mistake, for repentance is an evangelical duty and grace. The law requires innocence and perfect obedience, or condemns without mercy: the gospel commands and accepts repentance. This grace was purchased by our Saviour, and is wrought in us by the Holy Spirit; and joined with faith, are the firstfruits of the returning sinner to God. When it is exercised in the most eminent degrees, it has not the least merit nor causality in the obtaining pardon. If a repenting sinner could fill the air with his sighs, and heaven with his tears; if all his vital springs were opened, and streams of blood flowed out, they cannot be satisfactory to God's injured justice. The irreconcileable hatred of sin, the ardent love of holiness, and steadfast resolution to follow it, which are ingredients in sincere repentance, though they are pleasing to God, yet are the duty of the reasonable creature before the commission of sin, and therefore can deserve nothing of God. But the ordaining an inseparable connexion between repentance and pardon, is honourable to God, and very beneficial to men: for there is no state of misery more miserable than for the sinner to be hardened in his sins. But to return from this digression.

The scripture describes repentance by a sincere change and renovation of the mind, the leading faculty; by the entire turning of the heart from the love of sin to the love of holiness; by the active lively passions, sorrow, fear, shame, indignation, zeal, that are principal ingredients in it; and by the fruits "worthy of repentance, and works meet for repentance." It is called "repentance from dead works," and "repentance unto life." Now men are willingly deceived with an insincere and ineffective repentance: either with a mere mental change, or with broken resolutions instead of the entire heart; or with the leaving some sins, and retaining others that are suitable to their humours and lusts. They confess their sins, and condemn themselves for them: sometimes they have flashing thoughts, melting affections, good purposes to forsake sin, this they think to be sincere repentance: but when a temptation appears, they are easily overcome, and live in the habitual practice of their provoking sins. This conceit of their being true penitents, is as unreasonable, as if one that has a returning ague, should think himself freed from his disease in the intervals of his fits. Now to quiet conscience, they readily apply to themselves the words of the

apostle, "what I do, I allow not." And since the best saints, while they are in sympathy with frail flesh cannot be perfect, but many sins they unwarily and unwillingly commit, which are infirmities lamented by them, and graciously forgiven by their heavenly Father; therefore indulgent sinners take shelter under this pretence, that their relapses are mere unavoidable infirmities. But what weakness can be pretended for wilful habitual sins? Such excuses do not cover their guilt, but discover their strong affections to their lusts: they have not the excuse of ignorance: to pretend the flesh and the world are omnipotent enemies that cannot be resisted, is to blaspheme the grace of the Holy Spirit. In short, a new life is inseparable from repentance in its reality. Sad and serious thoughts, sighs and tears, the sorrowful confession of sins, and good purposes against them, are the blossoms of repentance, ineffective without the substantial fruits of it in a reformed conversation. It is one of the arts of satan to join things together that are inconsistent: in paradise he assured the woman that she might taste of the forbidden tree, and of the tree of life: and he now deceives many with the hope that their indulged repeated sins are consistent with repentance. But if men do not forsake the foul sins they lament, their sorrow will go with them to hell, and settle in the worm "that shall never die."

Fifthly. The tempter hinders men from compliance with the present invitations of grace, by suggesting there will be time enough for accepting them hereafter, and a future repentance will be sufficient to redress all their miscarriages. By this deceit he trains them on to ruin. By this he eludes the force of present convictions: that without repentance they must perish for ever, and puts men out of the compass of conversion. It is clear by its own light, and needs no other proof, that present obedience is due to the commands of God; "to-day if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts:" yet against all the evidence of the world without, and of conscience within, satan so strongly deceives men, that they rebelliously neglect their duty, till their time and life are expiring. But how unbecoming, how difficult, how hazardous is a late repentance? How unbecoming is it to put off God till hereafter? Such is his glorious majesty, we should with the most reverend respect, and humble thankfulness obey his first call. If a prince should invite a subject to come

to him for some great favour, would he so break all the rules of decorum, as to delay his coming, by saying, hereafter will be time enough? And what is the greatest majesty on earth to the God of glory? no more than a mote to the sun: and proportionably the indignity arises to neglect the offers of his grace.

Besides, how incongruous is it to give the flour of our time and strength to our lusts, and to reserve the bran for God? To spend the age of our vital and vigorous actions in the vanities and business of the world, and to allow only our languishing age for the obtaining of heaven? That men should content themselves with dead affections in his service who is their life, that were so lively in the service of sin that is their death?

How difficult is a late repentance? Can you repent and believe at your pleasure? Men think that in their age, after the ebbing and retiring of the carnal affections, they shall more easily forsake their sins: but it is a pernicious deceit. The native corruption of men's hearts, alienates them from a dutiful return to God; and contracted corruption by habitual practice, fastens them in sin as their centre. In youth, when the blood and spirits are high and fierce, the body has a corrupting influence upon the mind; but by custom in sin, the mind is so depraved, that it heats the frozen blood and corrupts the body. Suppose the exciting grace of the Spirit be not totally withdrawn, which has often been ineffectual; can it be expected that after men have been hardened in the commission and continuance of sin, they should be more receptive of heavenly impressions? A disease neglected at first, that stealingly slips into the habit of the body, and gradually weakens nature, becomes at last incontrolable and incurable.

How hazardous is it to neglect present obedience to the call of divine mercy? Our days, in the language of the psalmist, "are but as an hand-breadth;" and can men extend their lives beyond their span? A vast eternity follows without dimensions, an undivided duration. It is no more in their power to continue time to come, than to recal time past. How many are surprised by hasty death in their security, and die in their unrepented sins, and perish for ever? The wise man alarms the sluggard with approaching poverty, and his expressions are very applicable to the delayers of repentance: death comes like a traveller, gradually by silent steps; and as an armed man, will

irresistibly arrest them: and damnation follows, which they can neither repel nor discover till they are seized by it. O that deluded sinners would consider, that nothing so ripens them for death, and accelerates judgment, as the presumption that the season of grace will continue notwithstanding their lavish and careless wasting it!

But suppose that life be extended to the utmost date, can you expect that the Holy Spirit should visit you that have been so long putrefying in the grave, and breathe a new life into you? It is the most severe threatening, "my Spirit shall not always strive with man," and then their case is desperate. There is a fearful example recorded in scripture; the old world was first drowned in sensuality, and resisted the Holy Spirit till he was withdrawn; and then the deluge washed away those swine in the mire. Can you expect that at last when the world and your sins leave you, God will accept and receive you? You are commanded to seek him in your early spring, in the first dawnings of his light and favour, and is a poor remnant of your life sufficient for obtaining his mercy? The harlots respected not the dead, but contended for the living child: satan and the world strive to have the prime, and best part of your lives, but will God be contented with the dying remains? Or, do you expect an easy composition for all the abuse of his benefits, because of his patience? Do you presume because he forbears so long, he will readily forgive at last? The servant not called to an account till he was run into an irrecoverable arrearage of ten thousand talents, was delivered to the tormentors till he should pay all his debt. How are men degenerated, and fallen lower than the brute creatures? "The stork in the heaven knows her appointed times; and the turtle, and the crane, and the swallow observe the time of their coming; but men know not the judgment of the Lord." Jer. 8. 7. This consideration made our compassionate Saviour dip his words in tears. "He beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, if thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes,"

O wretched deceived souls! how long will you neglect a Saviour and salvation? How long shall "he wait to be gracious," and expect your lingering repentance in vain? Remember the time of grace is limited: if you refuse obedience to the present

call, do you know he will renew the offers of his grace? "Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation:" will this *now* last for ever? There is no *now* of favour and hope in hell. It is true, God is merciful; and it is one of his royal titles, "the God of patience:" though threatenings are denounced against sinners, and judgments are ready to seize upon them, he repents and stops his wrath: but there is no state more fearful in this world, than when men by neglecting repentance, make God "weary of repenting." "When patience has had its perfect work" towards the unrelenting and unreformed, justice succeeds: before God cuts off a sinner, he cuts off all his excuses. Read with fear the first of the Proverbs, "because I have called, and you refused; I will laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh." God's frown, much more his scorn, is infinitely terrible and insupportable. Those who delay repentance till the body is diseased all over, and death is printed in the countenance, and the languishing lights are almost quenched, and the vital frame is near a dissolution, yet presume a few sighs will transport their souls to heaven, how just and dreadful will their disappointment be? However they "are deceived, God is not mocked, as a man sows, he shall reap."

SERMON X.

LUKE XIV. 23.

The Lord said to the servant, compel them to come in, that my house may be full.

II. I Am now to consider the means by which men are wrought on to accept of the invitations of grace in the gospel. The sum of what has been discoursed of sinful and miserable man is this, the understanding, the directing faculty, is in ignorant darkness, and a dead slumber, not apprehensive of his misery. A dead eye does not see its want of sight, nor a dead heart feel its want of life. If the head be obstructed with clammy humours, the whole body is without sense: for the nerves have their root in the brain, and are the channels to convey powerful spirits, to give sense, and vigour, and motion to all the parts. The will is a fierce and free faculty, commanding and active, perverted and stubborn against the holy law of God. The affections are exceedingly disordered, and strongly inclined to sensual things that flatter them with satisfaction, and very tumultuous and fiery against whatever shall cross their natural inclinations. Now how can one so stupid and refractory, be made soft and flexible to the call of mercy? As the Epicurean in Tully objects against

the making of the world, *quæ machinæ qui vectes*, what engines, what levers were used in raising this vast fabric? What he spoke in derision, may be said with wonder. What engines, what instruments are used in craning up a soul sunk below the centre, to the highest heaven! What in making the new creation, that is more glorious and lasting than the first! It is a work respectively impossible, not absolutely, it can only be effected by the power of God.

There is no principle of recovery left in fallen man. The conversion of him from sin to holiness, and from the creature to God, is a miracle of grace: if he converted himself, it were super-miraculous. God can by his commanding power bring light out of darkness; but it is plainly impossible that darkness should produce light.

The external ministration of the gospel, without the concomitant ministry of the Spirit, is ineffective. The divinest preacher cannot soften the iron sinew, nor melt the heart of stone, nor make the rock to tremble. The prophet Isaiah, whose sublime eloquence overcomes all the admired orators of the world, yet complains, "who has believed our report? to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" Isa. 53. The angels of light, if they were sent from heaven, and were in this sense "ministering spirits," they could not by their seraphic zeal, and most excellent eloquence change and reform sinners. One evil angel seduced and corrupted the best man, Adam, in the state of innocence and happiness: but a council of good angels cannot restore one man, though the least tainted, to holiness and felicity. No creature can be a creator; the sanctification of a sinner is a new creation. It is only "the word of life" spoken by "the Lord of life," that can raise dead bodies and dead souls. Suppose the word of God be assisted by his rod, yet that will be ineffectual to cleanse and change their hearts without divine grace. It is according to the wise order of God, whom the word does not convert, the rod is made use of to cure; and whom the rod does not cure, the sword cuts off.

Prosperity furnishes the carnal appetites with delightful objects, and men are easily induced to neglect their duty: like children that forget their lesson when they are at play. Sense that reigns in beasts, and should serve in men, is then predominant. But affliction imbitters the carnal sweets, and is a

proper means to fix the thoughts, and restore the mind to its right and jurisdiction: as blows and hard usage bind up the ranging fancy in distracted persons; tames and tires them, and thereby reduces them to sobriety. Thus God is often pleased, by afflictions, "to show men their transgressions, to open their ears to discipline, and effectually command them to return from their iniquities." Job 36. But without the instruction of his Spirit joins with the voice of the rod, the utmost effect of even sharp and long afflictions is a forced and fading repentance. Constrained devotion is like fire struck out of a flint, hardly got, and soon gone. Thus it is said of the Israelites in the wilderness, "when he slew them, they sought him, they returned and sought early after God; but their heart was not right with him, neither were they steadfast in his covenant." How many open rebels have been awakened by the fear of death? and when they have tasted and seen the terrors of the Lord, what addresses, what submissions, what promises have they made to God? but after their reprieve, how soon have they forgot the past terrors, and broke all the bars of reason, and of their resolutions, and been as unreformed as ever. The wise man tells us, "bray a fool in a mortar, pound him in pieces, his folly will remain in him."

Nay, miracles without the application of them by grace to the spirits of men, are ineffectual to work faith and repentance. The end of them is by the evidence of sense to excite the mind, to consider the power that works them. But they may astonish the sense, and the mind not be convinced; or if convinced, yet they leave no permanent operation upon the hearts of the spectators. Moses charges the Israelites that notwithstanding they had seen all the miraculous strokes of God's power upon Pharaoh and his servants, "yet the Lord hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear to this day." When the Son of God appeared in his own likeness, and did such numerous and conspicuous miracles that compelled the most stubborn devils to acknowledge his Deity, yet the Pharisees remained obstinate and inconvincible. The soldiers who saw him rising in power and glory, and were almost frightened to death at the sight, yet continued obdurate in their infidelity.

Our Saviour assures us, "no man can come to him, except

the Father which hath sent me, draw him." John 6. 44. The words are full of emphasis, "no man:" the negation is universal; not only the act is denied, "no man comes," but the power, "can come;" no less than omnipotent grace draws him. A carnal man will "not come to Christ for life:" and he cannot will to come: for his mind is so forelaid with prejudice, and his will is so depraved and entangled with the love of sin, that he cannot sincerely * desire to be set free. Every delightful sin is like a charmed circle out of which the sinner cannot move.

We are not to conceive of this disability, as if sinners had not deliberative and elective faculties to consider and choose what is best: such a disability would be an argument for their innocence and justification: neither as if men had a will to forsake sin, and wanted power; like a miserable slave that sighs after liberty, but is fastened by heavy fetters: but the perverse will keeps them in bondage: "they serve divers lusts and pleasures," and delight in their fetters. It is a voluntary culpable impotence joined with a strong reluctancy to grace: it is the impudent imperious weakness of the whorish woman charged upon the Israelites, and admits of no apology and defence: nay, it aggravates the sin and sentence of such depraved creatures. As there is in virtue and holiness a divine degree of perfection, that makes persons not capable of departing from their duty: so there is a diabolical degree in sin, when the soul is so depraved, that it cannot abstain from doing evil. And as consummate virtue is most worthy of esteem and praise; so when a vicious habit contracted by a long custom in sin, absolutely possesses the soul, it is most worthy of abhorrence.

Now only divine grace "compels sinners to come to Christ," and to partake of saving mercies: that is, changes the bias of the will, and makes it obedient to the heavenly call. God is the supreme mover, and turns all occurrences in the world to his purpose and praise: and the hearts of men are not exempt from his dominion, but he "turns them as the rivers of waters." The effectual operation of grace does not violate the native freedom of the will, but is congruous to it. God's "drawing is by teaching: every one that hath heard and learned of the Father, comes to me." When the Author of the gospel is a teacher of

* Nec te posse carere velim.

it, the most stupid and obstinate sinners shall be convinced and obedient. To make this more clear, I will briefly consider the intellectual frame of man, and the natural subordination of the faculties in their various operations. As the spring in a watch, so the understanding is the first mover in the reasonable creature: the understanding has a double faculty; the apprehensive, to discover the good and evil in objects presented to it; and the judicative, to compare and ponder the good and evil discerned in things; and accordingly to esteem or disvalue, to approve or dislike. The will chooses what the understanding commends, and rejects what the judgment condemns. The affections of desire and delight are from the choice of the will, the affections of aversation and flight are from the rejection of the will. The pursuit or neglect of things, the application or opposition we make in our actions and practice to them, is from the delight or distaste of things in our affections. But when lust entered into the soul, it perverted this order. As the strong tide of the sea pouring into rivers, turns them back to their springs, in a course contrary to their natural motion: thus the heart overflowing with a strong tide of corruption, empties itself into the head the spring of actions: the unholy affections work upon the will to reject the offers of grace in the gospel; and the corrupt will works upon the mind to vilify them. It is to be observed, that the tempter works upon men's minds in the unnatural way; he makes use of the disordered affections to pervert the will, and of the perverted will to divert the understanding from due consideration of objects, and to corrupt its judgment. But God works by the understanding on the will and affections, according to the regular dependance of those faculties.

The first beam of saving grace shines into the mind with so strong a light, discovering spiritual and eternal things in their reality and glory, that the will and affections are drawn to choose, and embrace, and to follow them with zeal and constancy. In this blessed work, we are to consider the revelation of the object, and the irradiation of the mind. As in the discerning of corporeal things, there must be light in the eye, or there can be no seeing, and light in the air, or there can be no sight: so the great mysteries of godliness, which are of impossible discovery without revelation, are made known in the gospel; and the understanding is illuminated to see them in their

reality and transcendent goodness, as the apostle expresses, "this is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ is come into the world to save sinners." He prays for the Ephesians, "that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give them the spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the knowledge of him; that the eyes of their understanding being enlightened, they may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints." Ephes. 1. Although the evidence of faith be not so clear as that of sense, yet it is so sure, that the adherence of faith is more firm to its objects, though future, than of sense to things present. With the irradiation of the mind there is such a determining influence on the will and the affections, that Christ and heaven are joyfully chosen before all things. In converting sinners there is not a bare proposal of the objects of faith, with the motives to believe and accept them, and men are left to their own discretion and choice: the Holy Ghost who certainly knows the manner and efficacy of his own operations, expresses converting grace "by the exceeding greatness of his power toward them that believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead and set him at his own right hand in heaven." Ephes. 1. It is true, the principle of resistance in corrupt nature is not quite extinguished; but actual resistance is overcome by the Holy Spirit, who works "to will and to do of his good pleasure."

In the human will we are to consider the faculty of choosing and refusing, which includes in it freedom and liberty, without which it ceases to be a will. 2. The depravation of it: and this consists in a necessity of choosing the evil of sin, represented as pleasing to the carnal affections, and rejecting the law of God, which is holy and good. The sinning will contracted this necessity. Now grace does not destroy the nature of the will, but changes its quality: of carnal and earthly makes it holy and heavenly: this is expressed "by a new heart, and a new spirit." And "when the spirit of the mind is renewed by" illuminating grace, and the will and affections of the heart are renewed by purifying grace, the will does as freely and necessarily choose spiritual and eternal things, as in the state of nature it chose things pleasing to the corrupt appetites. God draws sinners to

himself with "the cords of a man," in a rational way, without violence to their faculties, and fastens them "by bands of love." He instructs the soul, and infuses such a principle and disposition as is suitable to the doctrine. When the will is directed and drawn, by the illuminating guidance of the mind, to choose and embrace the most excellent good, and the other faculties to obey, this is man's true liberty. In heaven the invariable fixing the will upon God our supreme good, is its perfection and felicity.

The outward means of inducing men to comply with God's call, is the preaching of the word. If it were the will of God, he can immediately create men as Adam, in complete stature, and with the perfection of reason; but he makes use of second causes, forms them in the womb, brings them into the world by the ordinary way of the earth, and raises them from infancy to a mature state, according to the rules of nature. Thus God could by one act sanctify sinners in perfection; but he is pleased by the preaching of the word to convert sinners, and gradually perfect the saints: the gospel is the ministry of reconciliation, and of regeneration. And this is very congruous to the human nature; 2 Cor. 5. James 1. for the sinner is not converted, as a stone ascends by a forced and blind motion, but is instructed and affected by proposing objects to his mind and will, and acts according to the impression he received from them. Now the natural man being "a servant to corruption," the external propounding of the most powerful objects and motives cannot change him: the converting efficacy of the word is from Jesus Christ. To make this more evident, let us consider, in every action where an instrument is used, the action is properly ascribed to the agent. God is a pure spirit, without any composition of bodily organs of speech; yet when he formed a voice in the air for the proclaiming the law, "he spake;" Exod. 20. 1. Deut. 5. 4. and whether by any created voice, or by the voice of men appointed for preaching the gospel, he speaks. In human speaking, the voice is from the tongue, but the sense and meaning is from the mind that directs it. From hence it is that the gospel preached is of admirable efficacy, and works above the power of any creature. "The word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow; and is

a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Heb. 4. 12. It subdues open rebels, and makes their pride and confidence fall as low as hell; it mollifies the most obdurate, and makes them compliant to the invitations of grace. And although the minister be never so mean in his person and appearance, yet a weak instrument in an almighty hand does wonders.

Our blessed Saviour in his person was the first preacher of the gospel; and in his sermons we are directed how to work upon the reason, and the affections of sinners, by which alone they are capable to be moved. The substance of his several sermons was, "repent ye, and believe the gospel." Mark 1.

1. The order and progress of converting grace is by the conviction of the mind, to turn the will and affections. Sin prevails in men by the love of pleasure; and till there be a mixture of what is more bitter than sin is sweet, they will not forsake it. "The world corrupted by lust," is an imaginary paradise, wherein there is nothing but "forbidden fruit;" and the fruit is so pleasant to the eyes and taste, that only flaming terrors will expel them out of it. No man will cut off his right hand till an incurable gangrene has seized on it. The light neglected notions of heaven are ineffective to reform sinners; till the terrors of the Lord are set in array against them, they are fastened in their sins. Of this there is visible and frequent experience: how many that have lived in a careless contempt of God till their last sickness, and when they feel themselves sinking to the grave and hell, and conscience is an exact remembrancer and terrible accuser of all their inward wickedness and notorious sins, then what furious reflections do they make upon themselves? and what promises do they make if they might be spared? It is therefore the first duty of ministers by clearing light and convincing strength to work on conscience, and by the mediation of it to apply guilt and wrath to the sinner, that he may be restless in his sins. "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men:" Rom. 1. it is decreed before the world was, it is denounced in the word, and shall be fully executed in the "day of wrath, and the revelation of the righteous judgment of God:" nothing is more certain than that day, and nothing so heavy as that wrath. It is a burden so insupportable, that the Son of God was ready to sink under its weight: he meekly and silently endured all the cruel rage of

his enemies, but mournfully broke forth, "my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!" Who can understand the consequence of that complaint? Who can support himself under the apprehension of an absent and angry God? When the convinced person ponders his sins, what indignities he has offered to the glorious God his maker and preserver, his lawgiver and judge; that he has abused his mercies, perverted his benefits, and employed them in the service of satan; that he has despised his justice, and ventured upon his inflamed anger for transient pleasure and trifling profits; when these killing aggravations are duly considered and laid close to the heart, how are all the sorrowful affections moved? serious grief that springs from the depth of the soul, confounding shame, anxious inquiring fear, to stop the execution of the fatal sentence passed against him? Thus it is related of those converts at the first sermon of St. Peter, that being convinced of their crimson guilt in their crucifying the Lord Jesus, "they were pricked in their heart, and said to the apostles, men and brethren, what shall we do?" Then sinners will humbly sue for peace by the blessed peacemaker Jesus Christ: then salvation will be so much the sweeter, by how much the danger was more threatening. The recovery from death to life is a double life.

2. The Lord Jesus must be proposed as an all-sufficient and compassionate Saviour, who invites the weary and heavy laden to come to him for rest. This is the order of the Spirit's operations, "first to convince of sin, then of righteousness." It is true, there are diversities of workings; the Spirit instructs and terrifies sinners by his office of bondage, but not always in the same manner and degrees: but the soul is so humbled by the sight of sin, and impendent wrath, as it sees and feels the necessity of a Saviour, and is willing to comply with the terms of mercy offered in the gospel. "The whole need not a physician, but those who are sick." A condemned man values a sheet of paper wherein his pardon is written and sealed, more than the conveyance of a rich estate. One near drowning values a cord thrown out for his rescue, more than a crown. Thus when the guilty are deeply sensible they have lost the favour of God, and cannot fly from his power, and there is but a step between them and eternal death, then a Saviour will be infinitely precious, and

they will entirely close with him. Now the gospel represents the Son of God incarnate.

1st. An all-sufficient Saviour by his propitiation, and intercession. The excellency of his obedience, and the excellency of his person were influential to obtain the pardon of sin. His propriety in the sacrifice, and the value of it, was requisite to atone the just displeasure of God for our offences. It is said, he "offered his own body on the tree:" his peculiar right in it was requisite to make it a proper and acceptable sacrifice. It is true, the Father and Holy Spirit had the same right in the human nature of Christ as the Son had, with respect to the making it: but the Son by assuming it into a personal union with himself, has a peculiar right in it, and offered his own in a strict sense. And in consequence of this, his sacrifice was of infinite value: he did not compound with God, but paid a ransom equivalent to what was due for sinners. He bled a fountain from his wounded side, "that cleanses from all sin." 1 John 2.

2dly. By his intercession. "He is able to save to the uttermost all that come to God by him, for he ever lives to make intercession for them." God pardons sin as a sovereign upon the throne: his authority is preserved entire without any condescension of his person; therefore the blood of Christ shed on the cross, is pleaded in heaven to reconcile God to us: he satisfied justice, and solicits mercy: "his blood speaks still," and its voice is as powerful as ever. The prevalency of his intercession depends upon the dignity of his sacrifice; the dearness of his person to the Father, does also assure us of his favourable audience. He declared on earth, "I know thou always hearest me."

3dly. The gospel sets forth his willingness to save us. Faith has an aspect upon Christ as able and willing to save: for power without a will to save is unprofitable, and the will without power is fruitless and ineffectual. For the begetting of faith we are to consider the proposal and offer of grace in the gospel, and the promise of it.

1. In the gospel there is a proposal of grace to all: the invitation is universal; "whoever will, let him come to the waters of life freely." Our Saviour gave this command to the apostles, "Preach the gospel to every creature." Neither the number

nor quality of men's sins are a bar against their coming to Christ for life. None are excluded but those who exclude themselves. In the parable those were earnestly invited by the command of the master of the feast, who refused to come. This offer of grace and life to all that will humbly receive it, is the first foundation of faith, and induces our acceptance of it: for without this, the self-condemned sinner sinks into misery bottomless and helpless. The most miserable despair is drawn from impossibility. If men think it is impossible to obtain what they desire, they will not endeavour to obtain. It is easily cleared by the scriptures, if men will believe the scriptures when they are clear, that as the brazen serpent, the sign of salvation, was lifted up on high, and made obvious to every eye, to convey healing virtue to those who were stung by the fiery serpents; so our crucified Saviour is lifted up in the gospel for every soul wounded sinner to regard. The belief of inviting mercy opens the springs of godly sorrow: a natural sorrow arises from the sense of oppressing evils, and is terminated upon ourselves: a spiritual sorrow proceeds from the sense of our unworthiness, and the divine goodness, that is so ready and desirous to save us.

2. There is a promise of grace to all that repent and believe. Our Saviour encourages us, "come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Those who feel sin as an intolerable burden, and their fainting souls are without support, let them devolve their burden upon him, and trust entirely in him, they shall obtain blessed rest. The timorous sinners that tremble under the weight of their guilt, are encouraged; for in this condition Christ invites them to come to him, and promises rest. Let them aggravate their sins to the highest, yet St. Paul challenges the precedence as the chief of sinners, and obtained mercy. When the heart is broken for sin, and from it, not to believe the promise of mercy, is dishonourable to our Saviour's love, and the value of his blood, as if not sufficient to save poor souls that would fain live in him. We have the strongest testimony of his love, in dying for us when we were enemies. Christ came with this intention to save sinners; and when they come to him, will he reject them? He cannot deny himself, he is truth, and he has most expressly declared, "whoever comes to me, I will in no wise cast out:"

and this promise is confirmed by the will of his Father that sent him. Christ invites thirsty souls to partake of the waters of life, and when he has inspired them with ardent desires, and they come, will he send them away empty? It is absolutely impossible for him who is incarnate love and mercy, to despise and reject the soul that looks to him, that longs and languishes after him, and will be ever unsatisfied without him.

In short, the precious promises in the gospel, of the pardon of sin, and eternal salvation, are so proposed to us, that the hope of returning sinners may be cherished and confirmed, and the presumption of secure sinners may be dashed and controlled. While we are in this middle state, the fear of caution, joined with the lively hope of mercy, is the most congruous temper, and becoming the breast of a christian. The presumer is like a ship without ballast, floating so lightly in his own folly, that every gust of temptation oversets him. The fearful spirit is like a ship overladen; and if not lightened, will certainly sink and perish. Fearless security exposes to all the temptations that gratify the carnal appetites: desponding fear causes a neglect of the remedy. If there be no fear of punishment, or no hope of pardon, the consequences are equally fatal.

3. It is necessary in order to the bringing men to Christ, to remove their carnal prejudices. The first and most feared difficulties are, that serious religion will be a damp to all their joys, a harsh and unreasonable restraint of their liberties, a bar against all the advantages of the world: the sickly fancy is frightened at the thoughts of this. If the way to heaven were short and fair, men would like it; but it is long and deep, and they are discouraged, as the Israelites with the tedious and troublesome wilderness, before their arrival at the Land of Promise. Accordingly carnal men cast a slanderous shade upon religion, as a melancholy, severe and joyless discipline. Now we may rectify these mistakes by the light of scripture, of reason, and of experience.

(1.) The scripture declares "that the ways of wisdom are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." Prov. 3. 17. The entrance, the progress, and continuance in these ways, is joyful to the renewed soul. Let us take a right view of the divine commands, the sum of them is this, that men would be happy here, and for ever. We are commanded "to know God

and Jesus Christ, this is our life:" John 17. 3. to trust in him, this is our strength: Isa. 30. 15. to love him and delight in him: Psal. 37. and are not love and joy the most pleasant affections? and is not God the most amiable and pleasing object? We are commanded to fear him: and is it not most reasonable to fear the loss of his favour, which is heaven, and the incurring his wrath, that is the deepest hell? We are commanded to obey his laws; and our Saviour assures us, "his yoke is easy, and his burden is light:" it is an easy and easing yoke, that frees us from the most cruel bondage of sin and satan. And will not men believe the testimony of eternal truth, rather than their fond fancies and corrupt appetites? We are commanded to hear his word? and is it not a happiness to be directed in the way to everlasting life? We are commanded "to pray continually;" is it not a blessed privilege that poor dust may address their requests to the "Lord Almighty, the possessor of heaven and earth," with an assurance, that those petitions are most pleasing to him, that are for his most excellent blessings?

Besides this, nothing is forbid but sinful pleasures that will end in eternal torments: sinful profits, the gaining of the world, with the loss of the soul: the gain is nothing, and the loss is infinite. Now where are the chains and fetters that are so hard and heavy as carnal men complain of? all his commands are precepts of happiness.

(2.) This testimony of scripture, carnal men esteem a notorious paradox: they can taste no pleasures but what are steeped in sense. Take away the enticings and blandishments of the carnal appetites, they understand no other pleasure: which is such a deceit, as if a sick person who feels no plessure but in the soft and easy intermissions of his disease, should conclude if he were entirely freed from it, he should be deprived of all pleasure. Whereas the pleasure of health is far more desirable and constant. The angels are absolutely exempt from the desires of our carnal faculties, and without carnal fruitions, but are ever blessed and joyful in the direct possession of what is good, not in the relief from evils either natural or accidental, as hunger and thirst, or sickness and pain.

Pleasure results from the suitableness between the preceptive faculties and the objects that affect them: if there be no harmonious proportion, there will be no music, no delight. Now it is

true, while flesh is the prevalling ingredient in a man, he only relishes the satisfactions of the senses: he cannot enjoy God, he cannot delight in doing his will, no more than a swine can in clean pasture, whose natural property strongly inclines it to wallow in the mire. But when the soul is clarified and purged by the great Refiner, how sublime and satisfying a pleasure does it feel in the love of God, and in his service! As in natural feeding, when the palate is in its due temper, the taste commends our proper food to the appetite, and the appetite to the stomach; but a foul stomach disaffects the appetite, vitiates the palate, and the most savoury and wholesome meat is loathsome when the disease is the taster; thus if the soul be in its due temper, the doing the will of God would be our "meat and drink," mixed with a sweeter pleasure than those natural operations are: but the soul is so corrupt and carnalized, that it has no taste of the pure delights of blessed spirits in communion with God: like the Israelites who despised the bread of angels, and impatiently longed for the onions and garlic and flesh-pots of Egypt. Till men die to sin, the supper of the Lamb will be insipid and nauseous.

The carnal mind as grossly mistakes about liberty. It is horrible folly to think true freedom consists in doing whatever the vicious affections require, in conversing with such persons as foment and gratify them. Is that person free that is fettered with as many chains of hell, as he has predominant lusts? Was the possessed person free who lived among the tombs, among contagious carcasses? Then a sinner, that without the fear of hell obeys his depraved appetites, and associates with those who are corrupt, and corrupters by their wicked example, is free. But it is evident that the mind, the superior leading faculty, is in bondage while the passions reign, and the sensual worldly wretch with his imaginary liberty, is the most accursed slave. Till the Son makes us free from the tyrannous power of sin, we are not free indeed. Till reason enlightened by the word, resumes its right and jurisdiction, and leads the will to choose what is best for a spiritual immortal creature, and the other faculties to obey, we are the slaves of satan. "When we are made free from sin, and become the servants of righteousness," Rom. 6. and yield an ingenuous delightful subjection to God's laws, we enjoy a state of liberty. Nay, the service of God is

our glory. "He that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his blood, has made us kings and priests to God." The most eminent acts of royal authority are to govern the subjects by equal laws, and to subdue the enemies of the peace and prosperity of the kingdom: and when divine grace reigns in the heart, and regulates all the thoughts and affections, the inward and outward faculties, according to the holy, just and good law of God, and subdues these rebellious lusts that disturb the order and tranquillity of the soul.

(3.) Experience proves that a state of religion is most delightful. Whenever the captive soul is rescued from the bondage of his lusts, and preferred to the service of God, how sweet is the change? and how bitterly will he complain, "other lords have had dominion over me," but thy service is the truest freedom? Did ever any of the saints complain that God is an austere master, that his service is a melancholy joyless condition? No, in their esteem and affections, his law is the most pure, precious, sweet and profitable good. "His commands are not grievous:" Psal. 19. they obey them from choice and complacence. They love the Lawgiver, and like the laws. Communion with God in his holy ordinances, is a heaven upon earth to them. "One day in thy courts is better than a thousand" Psal. 84. in the vanities and business of the world. "In the presence of God is fulness of joy;" and the more we are admitted into his presence here, the more we are admitted into his joy: all the blessed means of our drawing near to God, and his drawing near to us, are the gate of heaven, and entrance into glory. David, who was so acquainted with God, declares, "there be many that say, who will show us any good? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon me. Thou hast put more joy into my heart, than when their corn and wine increased." A joy more solid and satisfying than carnal men receive in the spring-tide of their fruitions. As one spark of God's wrath firing the conscience, is more terrible than the most fearful evils in the world: so one beam of his favour enlightening the soul, is more sweet and ravishing, than all the most valued and desired things in the world,

SERMON XI.

LUKE XIV. 23.

The Lord said to the servant, compel them to come in, that my house may be full.

III. I Shall now prove it is the great duty of the ministers of Christ to apply themselves with a holy zeal to bring men to partake of the saving mercies of the gospel.

This will appear by considering,

1. The command of God, from whom they are sent, lays the highest obligation upon them to perform their duty. The manner and degrees of obedience, are measured by the greatness of the authority that enjoins it. To sovereign authority, immediate, absolute, and supreme obedience is due. The authority of God is more binding than the highest in princes, or the dearest in parents: what are all kings of the earth to him? less than nothing. Temporal greatness consists only in comparison. In the scale of magistracy, the superiors to some are subordinate to others: but the majesty of God is absolutely and truly infinite. And as the immediate servants of the king are under special obligations to obey his commands, besides the common duty of his other subjects; so the ministers of the gospel by their

consecration and immediate relation to God, are bound with all zealous diligence to do his will.

2. It is the principal end of their commission. God designs in the contrivance and revelation of the gospel, to glorify his mercy, and his Son in our salvation.

First. Love is the clearest and most adequate notion of the Deity; "God is love." Now mercy is medicinal, healing, and recovering love. The object of it is the miserable and unworthy. In God's moral government, mercy and justice are the leading attributes, and mercy in its exercise has the supremacy: "mercy rejoices against judgment." When our first parents were cited to judgment for their rebellious sin, mercy promised a Saviour before the sentence was promised. God is styled the "father of mercies;" it is his natural offspring, the freest and most delightful emanation from him. Judgment is his strange work, that by constraint he executes. "He does not afflict willingly the children of men:" God is more pleased to see the fruits of his mercy in his creatures restored to happiness, than the effects of his justice in the guilty and miserable. To be inclined to do evil and hurt, is an imperfection infinitely distant and opposite to the divine nature. "The Lord God is a sun:" and as it is proper to it to enlighten, revive and refresh the world by its operations and influences; it is accidental to consume and destroy, and proceeds from the imperfection of things upon whom his beams fall. Thus it is according to the nature of God to dispense the liberal effusions of his goodness to the creatures; if they feel the effects of his justice, it is for sin that deserves it, and draws it forth into exercise. Mercy is God's glory: by glory we understand the lustre that results from the perfection of things, and is attractive and worthy of admiration. There is light in one beam of the sun; but glory results from the union of all its beams in their full strength. Accordingly a double glory belongs to God.

1st. His essential glory, that results from his transcendent excellencies; the supreme beauty and brightness of that unapproachable light wherein he is said to dwell: every attribute being truly infinite, is most glorious.

2dly. Declarative glory, that consists in the operation and influence of God's perfections, and in the humble and thankful adoration of them by intelligent creatures. Some divine attri-

butes are more eminently the glory of God: as they are more declarative of his perfections, and more sensibly and powerfully affect the minds and hearts of men. In this respect mercy, as it is the most benign and comfortable, so it is the brightest light in all the constellation of the divine attributes; it is our happiness we are under its aspects and influences. The other essential excellencies of God are regarded as the qualities of our sovereign infinitely above us, with most humble fear and respectful admiration: but his mercy represents him as our father and friend, and engages our affections entirely to him. When Moses desired to "see God's glory," he told him, "his goodness should pass before him." Now mercy is the most excellent degree of goodness. It is goodness primarily excited and active from itself, and takes occasion from the misery of the creature to be beneficent. It is observable, when he was proclaimed in his glorious titles, "the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious;" next to the Deity, mercy is placed as his dearest attribute: and of the thirteen titles of honour attributed to him, nine belong to mercy, to signify the advantage it has above justice. Mercy is his peculiar treasure: it is said "he is rich in mercy," not in possessions, "though the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof:" his riches are not without himself, but in his own perfections. Now it is the great design of God to glorify this attribute in the salvation of the lost and miserable. Adam had sufficient grace to stand, but was free to fall, and by the fraud of Satan joined with his own folly, was seduced from his duty, and involved himself and all his progeny in utter ruin. It was very becoming God that his enemy should not obtain his end, that mankind should not be the eternal trophy of the tempter, and so noble a part of the creation be as it were abolished for ever. From hence the mercy of God took its rise, and most apparently and eminently declared itself, in sending his Son the heir of his love and glory, to be the redeemer and ransom of the lost and miserable.

The gospel is made up of arguments and endearments, of commands and compassionate calls, of encouraging invitations, and the most constraining motives, that sinful men would apply themselves to our blessed Saviour, and not perish for ever in their sins. And God has appointed an order of men consecrated to this service. This is most excellently expressed by the apos-

tle; "now we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." 2 Cor. 5. From hence the duty of evangelical ministers is clear and consequent, that with zealous affections and persevering diligence they should endeavour to bring souls to partake of the grace of the gospel. An objection may be raised.

If God be pleased with the salvation of sinful men, why are not all saved? for nothing is the object of his will, but is within the compass of his power.

The objection is specious, and may surprise at first, but duly considered, may receive a sufficient answer.

1. It is a leading rule, that when doctrines are clearly revealed in the scripture, we must yield our assent, though we cannot resolve all the difficulties that are raised against them. It is unreasonable to deny what is evident, because we cannot unfold what is obscure. There is no doctrine more frequently and emphatically asserted in the divine writings, than that the repentance of a sinner, and his acceptance of pardon and life is very pleasing to God. He assures us in the most sacred and solemn manner of this: "As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way, and live:" Ezek. 33. 11. he is willing they should be saved, and they are wilful to be damned. With what tender and melting compassions does he argue with them, "why will ye die, O house of Israel?" as if they were upon the brink of hell, and ready to drop into irrecoverable misery.

2. We must distinguish between his decreeing will, and his approving will: whatever God decrees to effect, shall be infallibly accomplished; but many things that he approves, are left undone. His commands are his will, the rule of our duty, but not of his purpose what he will do. The scripture mentions "the word of God's power," and "the word of his holiness." The word of his power effects all things according to his will: but the word of his holiness, his laws declared to regulate our lives, are often opposed, and without efficacy.

3. The wisdom of God directs all the operations of his attributes; that orders the dispensations of mercy, and the inflictions of justice. When the apostle had considered the astonishing economy of providence with respect to the Jews and Gentiles,

he breaks forth, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" Rom. 11. 33. That so great a part of the world live in darkness, and die in darkness, and go to their fathers where they shall never see light, and the Day-spring from on high visits other nations, is according to the counsel of his will.

4. God does afford assisting grace to sinners, which if they improved, he would not desert them. The gospel "is the ministration of the Spirit," to illuminate, excite and persuade sinners not to forsake their own mercy. "He strives with them," he woos "and waits to be gracious," till by their obstinate resistance they quench his holy motions. It is true, he dispenses grace in different degrees, for he is the master of his own favours: but though effectual converting grace is not bestowed upon all, yet there is common grace, that has a tendency to conversion, which if humbly and thankfully improved, such is the most free and excellent goodness of God, men would receive further supplies. But they are careless and opposite to his gracious operations, therefore the Spirit is most righteously withdrawn from them. He that in luxury has wasted his estate, it is just he dies in poverty. Besides this, it is very considerable, that men shall be condemned at the last day not for mere impotence, but obstinate opposition: they loved "darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil:" John 3. 19. not for the want of that grace they did not receive, but for the neglect to improve that grace they had received, and rejecting what was offered. The slothful servant was condemned for hiding his single talent in a napkin, not because he had not five talents. Matt. 25.

Secondly. It is the great design of God to glorify his Son. When he brought his First-begotten into the world, the command was, "let all the angels of God worship him. God has given him a name above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and earth, and under the earth; and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Heb. 1. Those who cross his supreme wisdom and sovereign will, shall by a constrained submission acknowledge the high dignity of his Son.

The great command of the gospel is, that "men should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ:" 1 John 3. 23. "him hath God exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance and remission of sins." Acts 5. 31. The death of Christ may be considered as an act of obedience to God, and of love to men. His intention was to glorify God, by bringing lost souls to him. Now it is promised as a reward of his sufferings, he "shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied." He is infinitely pleased with the salvation of souls, as the fruit of all his anguish and bloody agony. The election of a number of the lost world, that shall believe in him, and be adopted and saved by him, has a special respect to his honour, that his death might not be in vain: that the Son of God may be magnified in his unspeakable love to them, and their sincere obedience to him: his relative glory, as head of the body, will shine in them for ever.

It is also observable, the decree of election which is of infallible accomplishment, both as to the conversion and perseverance of the elect, because the divine will is unchangeable and insuperable with respect to the events determined by it, hath a peculiar regard to the glory of Christ. No principle of opposition in the corrupt heart of man can frustrate the operation of God's Spirit, either in the powerful entrance, or sure continuance of his grace. Our Saviour tells us, "all that the Father gives me, shall come to me." John 6. 37. And, speaking of his sheep, he saith, "my Father which gave them me, is greater than all: and none is able to pull them out of my Father's hand." John 10. 29. The purpose of God, and purchase of Christ secure their salvation: for these our Saviour intercedes, "Holy Father, keep through thine own name, those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are." John 17. 11. His mediation is never interrupted: when Christ's prayer and God's power are ineffectual, then may they fall away totally and for ever, whom God keeps, and Christ commends to his keeping. From hence it appears, that the ministers of the gospel are indispensably obliged zealously to endeavour the salvation of souls, which the Father has designed for the honour of his mercy, and which the Son of God esteems his dearest glory.

THE APPLICATION.

1. From hence there is just cause to admire the glorious grace of God in converting sinners, and making them willing to comply with the terms of the gospel. Indeed it is strange to amazement, that men involved under the guilt of sins so numerous and so heinous, and liable every hour to the sentence of the law, so sure and severe, eternal death for their sins, should neglect a pardon so dearly purchased, and so graciously offered, and not with the deepest humility, with ravishing joy, and the highest thankfulness receive it. *Is* there no spirit, no understanding left in them? Nay, are sensible nature and its inviolable inclinations so extinguished, that they are enemies to themselves? But if we consider the depravation of mankind so inveterate and invincible, we shall turn the current of our wonder another way, that the obstinate perverseness of any is subdued, and that with consenting wills they receive Christ as their Prince and Saviour. Election is the fountain of distinguishing grace: "many are called, but few are chosen." Ephes. 1. Conversion, adoption, justification, sanctification, glorification, are all the fruits of electing mercy. Rom. 8. Ephes. 1. 2 Thess. 2. By the most gracious and free act of his own will, he chose some out of the corrupt generality, (and they are but a little diminutive flock) to make them vessels of honour, Acts 13. that his goodness might be the more admirable. Those who are made a willing people, John 12. were by the natural and contracted hardness of their hearts, as averse and repugnant to the heavenly call as others; if after a thousand repulses, the spirit had been withdrawn, they had died in their sins: but as it is said of Lot's miraculous rescue from the flames of Sodom, "While he lingered, the angels laid hold upon his hand, the Lord being merciful to him, and brought him forth, and set him without the city;" so the free and omnipotent grace overruled their reluctant hearts, and strongly and sweetly inclined them to God their supreme and satisfying good, and to come to Christ as the only means to restore them to the favour and enjoyment of God. The natural man is no more able to believe with a saving faith in Christ, than to obey the whole law: "it is the gift of God." He provides the means of salvation, and applies them; he by

victorious grace "leads captivity captive," and bestows that most precious gift upon his people. How many that enjoyed the same gospel, and did not reject so many invitations, nor so often grieve and vex the Holy Spirit, nor so long abuse the patience of God, were justly left in their sins? this will set a lustre upon special and saving mercy. O, what a conspicuous discovery, what a lively and thankful sense will there be of this grace in the next world! Our Saviour tells the unbelieving Jews, "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves turned out." Luke 13. 28. The comparison of the opposite states will then be more joyful and transporting to the saints, and more manifest and tormenting to the reprobates. They shall feel a burning thirst after the happiness they have lost, and be tortured between desire and despair for ever.

2. Let those who make light of the invitations of grace, consider what will be the issue of their obstinacy. Within a little while conscience will awaken the remembrance of their careless contempt of the divine mercy, and that will awaken despair. To instruct such persons, and make them afraid, that they may fly to the sanctuary from the destroyer, let them consider,

(1.) This will render them inexcusable. Their obduration and final ruin will be of themselves. God is pleased to appeal to the human understanding, "What could I do more for my vineyard, that I have not done?" His works and his words are declaratory of his will, how pleasing the repentance and life of sinners is to him. He has prepared a Saviour and salvation, and offers them to lost souls. In the year of jubilee, liberty was proclaimed for all the Israelites who had been servants; but if any one would not leave his master, his ear was bored, and he was a servant for ever. Thus the acceptable year of the Lord is proclaimed in the gospel, a happy freedom to sinners by Jesus Christ: but those who are in love with their reigning lusts, refuse this freedom, and are condemned to the worst bondage for ever. God by his authority commands them to "repent and believe the gospel:" he invites them by the most gracious promises to accept and receive them: he expresses the most tender compassions towards perishing sinners; "Why will ye die?" He reproaches their unaccountable folly, "How long ye simple ones will ye love simplicity?" He urges them by terrible

threatenings, not to neglect his offered grace. But they are deaf to his loudest calls: if a lust whispers from their earthly affections, they are presently moved. No mercy will soften them, no reproofs will reform them; the richest means of grace are lost, and they prodigally perish. Now how justly do they fall under the condemning sentence of the law, who slight the mercy of the gospel? "God takes no pleasure in the death of a sinner, but they take pleasure in their sins: they die in their sins, because they will die:" they are deprived of life, "because they will not come to Christ that they may have life." At the day of judgment lost sinners will entirely clear God, and deeply charge themselves with their deserved ruin.

(2.) Such are irrecoverable. The gospel is the only dispensation of grace; if men obstinately reject it, their condition is as desperate as if they were bound in chains of darkness to the judgment of the great day. Mercy alone can heal us; and if that be wounded, our sickness is incurable. "He that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." John 3. 36. His doom is sealed and irreversible. God now speaks in a still voice, but hereafter he will speak in a whirlwind to the despisers of his grace. It is true, we cannot say a soul is quite lost while there is a delay of judgment: but the scripture declares, that sinners by their stubborn refusals of mercy, make God inexorable to their prayers: Luke 19. 42. there is a day of grace, and the lapse of it is fatal to the neglecters. Of this there have been very fearful examples: how many despisers of the grace of the Redeemer in the course of their lives, yet in the agony of their last departure, when their sins with a ghastly aspect appear, and with frightful horror they look into the bottomless pit, conscience anticipates the divine judgment. Let the most compassionate ministers offer them the cordials of the gospel, and tell them they despair too soon! the self-condemning conscience replies, they repent too late. O that men were early wise to secure their eternal interest!

(3.) The neglect of salvation, will aggravate the sin of men. "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light." John 3. 19. The higher the disobedience, the lower the damnation will be of sinners. The heathens in their race of ignorant rebellion are not so guilty, nor liable to so heavy a sentence as those who dis-

obey the gospel. The Israelites had so abused the mercies of God to his dishonour, there were no such rebels on earth; the prophet was fain to descend to hell for a comparison to equal their wickedness: "hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah." Isa. 1. 10. But those who turn the grace of God into an occasion of their sinful security, are not to be paralleled in hell. The devils rebel against the Creator, against his authority and laws, but men rebel against their Sovereign and Saviour, and his admirable grace. The Son of God interposed as Mediator to make God reconcileable to the world: "but he did not assume the nature of angels, he took no hold of them, nor can they take hold of him." Heb. 2. The golden sceptre was never extended to them: justice was strict and severe; for the first sin they were presently expelled from the habitation of glory, and their doom is irrevocable. But men are within the reserves of mercy; God spares them in order to pardon, and renews his compassionate calls to them to forsake their sins, and live: by his word and wonderful patience he invites them to repentance, and by repentance to his favour, and to happiness. Now what a violent provocation is the contempt of such mercy; the furnace of hell is heated seven times more for the despisers of the gospel. How will the remembrance of their folly rack their torn minds? The fiercest furies cannot so torment them as their self-condemning consciences.

3. Let the ministers of the gospel be excited to discharge their commission with fidelity. I shall set down some directions and motives in order to it. The general direction is this, *salus populi suprema lex esto:* the salvation of souls is the end of preaching, and must regulate it. The qualifications of a minister to make him successful are,

First. Excellent knowledge. An ignorant minister is a plain solecism, as to say a blind eye, not capable to perform the act proper to it. The office and authority without abilities to exercise it, is in vain. The apostle declares the perfection of the scripture, that it is profitable "for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." 2 Tim. 3. He is to instruct the ignorant, to remember the careless, to refute the erroneous, to resolve the doubting, and com-

fort the afflicted. Not only fidelity, but wisdom is requisite in the servant whom his lord made ruler over his house, to give them meat in due season. Matt. 24. 45. There must be substantial learning to convince gainsayers, and spiritual skill to understand the arts of the tempter, who will sail with every wind, and make use of the various dispositions of men to do them mischief. He feeds the blazing presumption of indulgent sinners: he speaks peace to them when God is their enemy: if there be sometimes a sad countenance, the shadow of repentance, it is sufficient. But he perplexes tender and fearful spirits, by suggesting they do not mourn enough, to damp their endeavours, and make them heartless in God's service. Now it is a principal duty of an evangelical minister to unmask the malice of satan, and defeat his design: to preach the word in that distinct manner, that secure sinners may be afraid of vengeance, and that the penitent may apply the divine mercy. "He that wins souls is wise." Prov. 11. 30. The terrors of the Lord must be set in array against the rebellious obstinate transgressors; but the indulgent love of our heavenly Father, the tender compassions of our sensible Head and Saviour, and the consolations of the Holy Comforter, are the portion of relenting and returning sinners.

An understanding minister instructs his people in their duty and happiness: he will not offer them "stone for bread;" intricate controversial matters that astonish and cannot edify, but plain evangelical truths, the proper food for the soul.

The manner and language in preaching must be answerable to the majesty of divine truths. There is nothing more odious than a sacred subject triflingly handled. The affectation of wit and flaunting eloquence frustrates the end of preaching, that is, to convince sinners of their guilt and misery, and by the conviction of conscience to make them fly to the sanctuary, our blessed Saviour, for protection: partly because those things that flatter the fancy, are not proper to affect the conscience: light trimmings of language, gaudy expressions, glittering points of wit please the imagination; but conscience is excited and inflamed by representing eternal things with powerful plainness, and in a solemn manner: and partly because the human spirit being limited, while one faculty is attentive, another suspends its activity and operations; so that the exercise of the fancy hinders

the mind from serious reflecting on divine truths, and applying them to the soul. Vain ornaments in a sermon are like a painted complexion, the more it is advanced to the eye, the more it is abased to the judgment.

The discourse of a preacher should directly go to the heart: it should be so framed as to prove and illustrate the subject, and work on the understanding and affections. We have the pattern of this in scripture, where the love and mercy of God to his children, and his justice and power against his enemies, are represented in the most pathetical manner. I will produce an instance of both: "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet I will not forget thee." Isa. 49. 15. What can be more supporting and comforting? The other instance is as terrible. "God is angry with the wicked every day. If he turn not, he will whet his sword; he hath bent his bow and made it ready. He hath also prepared the instruments of death." Psal. 7. 11, 12, 13. This description of God's righteous displeasure is more powerful to shoot through the conscience of hardened sinners, than the bare threatenings that justice will surely punish them.

Secondly. A minister should be zealous and diligent in the discharge of his office. St. Paul adjures Timothy in the most solemn and fearful manner, "I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing, and his kingdom: preach the word, be instant in season, and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine." 2 Tim. 4. 1, 2. Did the apostle stir up the fire in so vigilant a minister, how much more needful is it to blow up the embers in our drowsy spirits? Certainly if conscience be not seared and dead, so sharp a charge will rouze it to the performance of our duty.

Zeal for the glory of our Saviour, if it inflame our hearts, will fire our lips, and animate our sermons. Let knowledge be the breath to blow the sacred fire, and the most burning zeal is not excessive. But our affections at the highest are very defective: how many preach the word so coldly, as if they had no desire to save souls from eternal death?

How many ministers lie down in their laziness, and wretchedly neglect their duty, to better themselves and benefit others

in preaching the gospel? Idleness enervates and unstrings the bent of the spirit: the mind is benumbed by a useless and ignoble dulness.

Some who are deputed shepherds, may think it a disparagement to their greatness, to be frequent in so mean a work as preaching; whereas the Son of God was a preacher of the gospel. Others make a gain of the flock, but put off the instructing and care of it to others. They will serve Christ by proxy, who died for us in his own person. How can they commit to others the charge immediately entrusted to themselves? What exemption can they plead, what account can they give to the great Shepherd?

Thirdly. Let ministers, that they may be successful, adorn the holy, (and without holiness dangerous) office of the evangelical ministry, by a suitable conversation. Innocence, and abstinence from foul sins, are not sufficient to recommend them; but "the power of godliness, and the beauty of holiness" must shine in their lives. They can never effectually teach others what they do not practise themselves: if any sin reigns in them, their prayers cannot ascend with acceptance to God, and descend with a blessing on the people. Let a minister preach divine doctrine, yet if his conversation be earthly and sensual, he is more likely to harden sinners than to convert them. How unbecoming and disgraceful are unholy ministers to their profession? What a scandal do they give to the profane, and occasion to blaspheme their high and holy calling? Let such prepare themselves for "many stripes:" they cannot escape a double damnation, for the neglect of their own souls and the souls of others committed to them. Though a heavenly light shines in their sermons, if in their practice they are "dark clouds, the blackness of darkness is reserved for them for ever."

Fourthly. Union among ministers is a happy advantage to recommend their doctrine to the people. Division and jealousy will lessen the authority and efficacy of their preaching. If one dog opens, the deer is not alarmed, but the full cry rouses him. When ministers with one consent declare the wrath of God from heaven against sin, the profane and secure are afraid: and the awful fear of justice makes them seek for mercy. It is true, there cannot be expected an entire conformity in opinions among the wisest and best men: therefore in doctrines not so clear nor

of that moment as the great truths, a mutual forbearance is our duty. But to coin controversies about clear and necessary truths, and obscure them by opposition, is a great hinderance to the success of the gospel. Some worthy men earnestly deny the gospel to be a law: will they reform the scripture? Is not the gospel called the law of faith, the law of liberty, the law of the spirit of life? It is true, the gospel is a covenant of grace, but it has all the essentials of a law: it is the revealed will of the sovereign Lawgiver, commanding sinners to repent and believe, upon no less reward and penalty, than eternal life to penitent believers, and eternal death to those who disobey the gospel. Now the command and sanction are the proper characters of a law. If we duly consider it, the sovereignty of God is such, that whatever covenant he offers to the reasonable creature, has the force and obligation of a law. I instance in this one point, that of late has occasioned an unhappy difference. O the blessed state above, where ignorance and strife are abolished for ever!

Fifthly. Frequent and earnest prayer to God is a powerful means to render our ministry successful. "Paul plants, and Apollos waters, but God gives the increase." Let a minister be completely furnished with learning, judgment, eloquence, yet all his labour will be fruitless without divine grace. A key that is exactly fit to all the wards of a lock, cannot open it without a hand to turn it. Let the most proper and powerful motives to work upon the reasonable nature be represented, yet they cannot open the heart, unless they are managed by the Holy Spirit.

It is very observable, that in the narrative of the miracles by the prophets, some circumstances are related, that declare they were done by the divine power. Sometimes the command of God was before the performance: thus in all the astonishing works done by Moses, the command of God was the beginning. "Take thy rod, stretch out thy hand," Exod. 7. 16, 19. & 8. 5. & 16. 9, and other orders that demonstrate the miraculous actions not to proceed from an inherent virtue in his person, but from a superior and borrowed power. Sometimes prayer was addressed to God before the miracles were done: thus Joshua first speaks to the Lord, before he commands the sun to stand still upon Gibeon, and the moon in the valley of Ajalon. Josh.

10. 12. Thus Elias and Elisha revived the dead by prayer to the Lord of life. 1 Kings 17. 20, 21. 2 Kings 4. 33, 34. This was declaratory, that the prophets were but instruments, and that God was the absolute author of them. Accordingly in the conversion of souls, which is a work as miraculous as any of those illustrious miracles, there must be the divine appointment of the means, and ardent prayer to God for his blessing. It is the great encouragement of ministers in their service, that whatsoever is God's ordinance shall effect that for which it is ordained: the rod of Moses was powerful to subdue Egypt, to drown Pharaoh and his host in the red sea. Three hundred soldiers with Gideon, only armed with lamps and pitchers, destroyed the numberless army of the Midianites. Astonishing victory! "And the gospel is the power of God to salvation." But prayer is requisite to obtain the Holy Spirit, by whose influence the word is effectual to recover lost souls to heaven. And it is evident, that numerous and entire conversions of sinners have been by the ministry of holy men, who made it their great and earnest request that they might be successful in bringing souls to Christ. Cold formalities are unacceptable to God, and without efficacy; but prayer actuated with life and holy heat of affection, ascends to heaven and prevails. And what is more worthy of our constant and most ardent desires, than the salvation of precious and immortal souls?

II. To excite ministers to a faithful discharge of their duty, let them consider,

1. The example of our blessed Saviour. It was one principal part of his office to preach the gospel: this he undertook in wonderful mercy, and performed with amazing diligence. He rises before day, and retires himself into a solitary place to pray, that he may lose no time in preaching. He preached on the mountain, in the desert, in the ship, in the synagogues, in the highway, in the house: no place, no persons, no time was unseasonable. It was "his meat and drink to do the will of his Father." Mark 8. 35. Matt. 5. 1. Mark 6. 36. Matt. 13. Luke 10. 39. John 4. 34. Thus constant and delighted was the Son of God (who laid aside his majesty and glory, that he might instruct the people without terrifying them) in his blessed work. How does his example reprove and upbraid our negligence? How should it inflame us to imitate and honour him?

2. His love to us should make us ardent and active to save souls, as a testimony of our love to him. Thus he speaks to Peter, "lovest thou me? Feed my lambs." It is his delight and glory to be the Saviour of sinners. How dearly has he bought our love? How willingly did he redeem us when we were enemies? His love condescended to our low state, to become a servant, that he might exalt us to his state, to be the sons of God. How does he out-love us? We do not love his glory as he loved our meanness, not him the blessed God, as he did us cursed creatures. O the miracle of his ardent love to us! O the strangeness of our cold affection to him!

Love cannot be idle, but will add fire and vigour, and cause unfainting perseverance in our Lord's service. Love and duty will overcome all difficulties. If we consider by how many titles he deserves our service, and feel the dear obligations he has laid upon us, we shall compel "them to come in," that our glorious King's "house may be full."

I shall only add, that to save souls, the work is glorious, and the reward is more glorious. In the assembly of immortal spirits above, all united in perfection and felicity, "those who turn many to righteousness, shall shine with a brighter glory, like the stars for ever and ever." Who would be so unhappy as to prefer sluggish ease before a brighter crown in heaven?

Lastly. I will finish this discourse with an earnest persuasive, that men would comply with the invitations of the divine mercy. Who can without some sparks of pity and indignation seriously observe that men are slight and foolish in things of eternal interest, beyond all the degrees of folly in the concerns of this world? Who would that is in danger to lose his life or estate, and has but one day to secure them, waste it in frivolous matters, when the opportunity is so short, and the omission is irreparable? Yet although the present life be certainly short, and uncertainly continued, and eternity depends upon our present securing the favour of God, and our title in his kingdom, men employ their time to "gain the world," and neglect their salvation, in comparison whereof all the affairs of time are a busy folly, and vain impertinence. Stupendous security! Now to persuade men to come to Christ for life, let them consider,

1. It is God's call, to which present obedience is due. Carnal sense is apt to object, is it not a man I see and hear? It is

true, but the message is the King's, not the ambassador's that brings it. A spiritual eye looks beyond the object of carnal sight, and sees Christ in the minister by the light of faith. Were this believed, how would it fasten our minds and senses in the most serious attention to the preaching of the gospel!

2. Make judicious comparisons between this world and the next. As in the light of the sun there is an influence that cherishes the vital heat, and a power that extinguishes the kitchen fire; so the light of God's word has a double efficacy, it kindles heavenly, and quenches earthly affections. Indeed there wants neither glory nor joy, nothing of complete happiness in the world to come, to raise our affections and fasten them upon it: and in this world all is vanity and vexation to alienate our affections from it. What infinite distance and disproportion is there between the objects of our choice? Who would think it possible, but that it is visible every day, that they who have immortal souls should be careless of eternal things, and spend all their pains and passions about things that expire with the flux of time? That they should neglect solid happiness, and pursue shining bubbles? But the present world fascinates their understandings, inspires their fancy with dreams of happiness here: sensuality charms them into stupidity: they are unwilling to be disenchanted; they enjoy their error, and are entertained with pleasant delusions, till awakened by eternal flames.

Let the enlightened mind consider and judge, the soul is of a divine original, a spiritual substance of an everlasting duration, and can never be happy but in the enjoyment of those objects that are divine and spiritual, commensurate to its capacity and duration. Let a man possess the world with all its advantages and delights, the starved soul would suffer infinite want, and can only be satisfied with the fulness of God.

Under what notion soever happiness is conceived, it is only to be found in God. What can enrich a spirit but spiritual treasures? Holiness is the richest jewel in the celestial crown. What can dignify and ennoble a spirit, but an alliance to God as a father, and the likeness of him in his divinest excellencies? What can satisfy an immortal spirit, and replenish it with joy, but vital union with God, and the immediate influence of almighty and eternal goodness? Carnal men when they obtain their immediate end, riches, honours and pleasures, they fail in

their main end, true happiness: they seem wise for the present, and are fools for ever.

The scripture tells us, "the less is blessed of the greater." How can the present world that is so inferior to man in the nobility of his nature, afford perfection and satisfaction to him? How unsuitable, how insufficient is it to fill the largest and strongest desires of the soul?

The world may cloy, but cannot satisfy us; but the favour of God, the more it is enjoyed, the more it is desired, and delighted in. Carnal joy seems, but is not; fear and stings of remorse may be disguised and glossed over with a cheerful countenance and carriage, but are not extinguished. Spiritual joy seems not, but is: the apostle tells us, "as sorrowful, but always rejoicing:" 1 Cor. 6. 10. there may be a winter in the face, and a flourishing spring in the heart. There is a secret sweetness in the practice of religion, that the unrenewed are strangers to: they cannot see or taste.

Carnal joy cannot repel its contrary; it cannot endure the assaults of the slight and transient evils, to which we are exposed here. Sickness, disappointments, apprehensions of evils that hover over us, may imbitter the most pleasant condition. A wounded spirit, like an ulcerous palate that is fretted and pained with the sweetest things, turns all the pleasures of the world into vexation. Fear struck Belshazzar at his feast into a trembling. "But peace with God, and the joy that flows from it, the world can neither give nor take away:" it is as unable to destroy it as to produce it. "Believers rejoice in tribulations." Rom. 5. 2, 3.

All carnal joys are of short continuance. "The world passes away, and the lusts thereof." 1 John 2. 17. Life is dying, and the comforts of it. "All flesh is grass, and the glory as the flower of the grass;" that by heat or cold, by a blast or a worm is soon destroyed. All the objects of the sensual passions are very fading. The finest stamp of beauty in the countenance, how easily is it defaced by sickness or sorrow, by many accidents or age? Riches take the wings of the morning, and flee away from the possessors: honour is casual and uncertain: the sceptre of David, so great a king, the royal branch of his family, degenerated into a poor carpenter.

The greatest in the world, and the most proud of their great-

ness, the luxurious voluptuaries, shall their pomp and delights continue with them in the grave? Can they reign and revel when their bodies are in the dust, and their souls in hell? Where is their admired happiness? Is it not all dead with them? Nothing will then remain but the tormenting remembrance of their folly. "But the word of the Lord endures for ever:" 1 Pet. 1. 25. it is an immortal seed, and makes the ground it is planted in, to live for ever. We are assured, "he that does the will of God, abides for ever." The blessedness of heaven is everlasting, as God the object of it, and the soul that enjoys it. There is nothing defective in the state above, where happiness is surrounded with eternity. This is worthy of our most aspiring ambition, of all our hopes and desires. Now is it possible that the present world, as empty as the froth of the sea, as vanishing as a puff of air, should be chosen before celestial happiness? It is by the most, so prodigiously are carnal men swayed by sense, that like brute beasts they are violently drawn by present things, and little moved by things spiritual and future. The devil brings ready money in his hands, and tempts them with this present world; the Son of God offers in his word eternal happiness, which is despised in the comparison. If one should choose a small sum at present before the sure reversion of an estate that would enrich him all his life, would he not be despised by all for want of understanding? Yet men allow that folly in their own practice, that they would condemn in others. But such is the mercy of God, that to persuade and prevail with us, he uses all the arguments that can work upon the minds of men. Hope and fear are the strongest springs to move us; he therefore sets before us heaven and hell, to attract our hope, and excite our fear. He makes use of hell to kindle our zeal in seeking the kingdom of heaven. The most violent passions are overruled by fear. Now in the threatening of hell all the motives of fear are united. Little evils are despised, not feared: great evils that may be easily avoided, or apprehended very remote, are not feared. But evils that are imminent and destructive, are the most powerful objects of fear. Now every man in his sinful state, hangs by slender strings over the bottomless pit: and for his under-prizing and neglect of heaven, falls under the sentence that determines his state in an everlasting hell. There is no dawning in that darkness of sorrow, no refreshing in those flames. There

is a restless remembrance of what is lost, as a light that comes through a cranny in a dungeon, that the forlorn caitiff may remember the pleasant reviving light of which he is deprived. A thousand years of torment cannot expiate the offences of those who disobey the gospel: they are full of misery, and fuller of guilt, that remains in its weight upon them for ever.

The fear of this, if duly believed and considered, will bridle the strongest desires after this vain world, and make men wise, that they may not perish in their choice.

To conclude, Let those who are invited to this heavenly feast, come with "the wedding garment: it is an allusion to the decent custom of wearing rich apparel for ornament and lustre at marriage solemnities, to express joy, and to honour the persons that are married. Accordingly all that are in the visible church, should adorn the gospel by a conversation becoming the dignity and purity of their high and holy calling. Unfeigned faith that unites us to Christ, and is effectual and evident in all good works, is the wedding garment. The apostle exhorts the Romans "to walk honestly, as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envy;" and whereas it might seem congruous to have added, in direct contrariety to those foul sins, put on temperance, chastity, patience and charity, he directs them to put on the Lord Jesus Christ: because he is the only fountain of supernatural grace, by which our lusts are mortified. Faith "covers us with the robe of his righteousness, and clothes us with the garment of salvation." Isa. 61. 10. A counterfeit livery of profession will not make us accepted of God. Is there any real christianity without faith in Christ? and is there a lively faith without obedience to him? Can you be a subject without subjection? Christ is the king of saints; they are the citizens of his kingdom, and only enjoy the privileges of it. How many are christians in title, and infidels in practice? They live in the bold contempt of the divine law, as if they were afraid the justice of God should not have cause enough to condemn them, or they would put it to a venture, whether he would be true to his threatening, and punish according to his law? Others, though of a fair conversation, are but half christians: they do not sincerely and entirely comply with the terms of the gospel, to receive Christ for their "Prince and Saviour." Let such remember, "the king came in to see

the guests, and saw a man without a wedding garment:" Matt. 22. 11, 12. this signifies God's judicial observation of all that are in his church, not one can escape his all-discerning eye, the closest hypocrite is transparent in his sight. It follows in the parable, "he saith unto him, friend, how camest thou in hither without a wedding garment?" Nothing will be available in judgment, not the most specious and glittering profession, without faith in Christ, and a renewed heart and life: yet many fondly dream they may be saved, though not sanctified. "He was speechless," reduced to a defenceless silence and confusion. The heart of man is deceitful above all things, and above all things deceitful to itself: how often in the trial of his spiritual state, by excuses and false glosses he deceives and satisfies himself. But there are no apologies before the King: all things are entirely open to his eyes: the thoughts of men will be their accusers, and their works will depose against them. And how fearful is the judgment that follows! "Then said the king to the servants, bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." "Bind him hand and foot:" the expression signifies that the revenging power of God is inevitable and irresistible. "Cast him into outer darkness" that signifies the separation from the reviving presence and communion of God: "there is weeping and gnashing of teeth;" the expression signifies the deepest sorrow and highest fury in the damned. What a discord and tumult of the tormenting passions is there? What misery, when the quickest sense to feel, and the greatest evils to be felt, are there? Hell is an intolerable climate, where cold despair and hot rage are in extremity for ever.

FUNERAL

SERMONS.

A

SERMON

PREACHED UPON THE MUCH LAMENTED DEATH

OF OUR

LATE GRACIOUS SOVEREIGN

QUEEN MARY.

TO THE

MOST ILLUSTRIOUS

WILLIAM

DUKE OF BEDFORD.

May it please your Grace,

IN this season of grief that overspreads three kingdoms, I thought it not unbecoming me, to add one voice to the consort of mourners.

The universal goodness of the Queen's life, is attended with a sorrow of equal compass at her death. If we consider the causes of it, our sins, the just incentives of God's high displeasure, and the chain of fearful consequences that may ensue; what heart is such a frozen fountain as not to dissolve, and mix flowing tears with the current that will be permanent in times to come.

I have presumed to inscribe your Most Honourable Name in the following Sermon, knowing that notwithstanding the meanness of the composure, the subject of it will be very pleasing to your grace, as being the expression

of homage to the memory of the incomparable Princess, our Sovereign by a double title, by her resplendent virtues, and by her crown. I am

My Lord,

Your Grace's very Humble

and Obedient Servant,

WILLIAM BATES.

A

SERMON, &c.

PSALM CII. 26, 27.

They shall perish, but thou shalt endure, yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment, as a vesture shalt thou change them and they shall be changed. But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end.

THIS Psalm was according to the judgment of the best interpreters composed during the captivity in Babylon: and in the former verses the prophet reflects sadly upon the church's afflicted state, and his own misery and mortality: verses 14, 23, 24. he extends his view to the ruinous prospect of the fabric of heaven and earth: they shall decay, and be destroyed, either in their substance, or qualities and use: perish by consuming, or be changed by a purifying fire. From this consideration he turns his thoughts to the immutable constancy and eternity of God, "but thou art the same;" thy compassionate favour and power never decline; "and thy years shall have no end." Upon this ground he raises his hope, that God will revive and restore his church; "the children of thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before thee."

The proposition that I shall discourse of is this,

That the unchangeable everlasting perfections of God are the sure foundation of the church's hope in its desolate state.

In the managing of it, I shall, First, consider the unchangeable perfections of God. Secondly, How they are the foundation of the church's hope.

I. In discoursing of the first head I shall premise, that the most sublime spirits in heaven cannot fully discover and comprehend the intimate and unsearchable perfections of God. "He dwells in that light which is inaccessible," the astonishing glory of his essence. How little then of his nature is known here? In the present state of union with the flesh, we cannot contemplate things purely spiritual without some material resemblances. Human knowledge and language begin by the senses, and in the assent of the mind to the supreme region, we are constrained to make use of the most refined sensible representations of divine things, as rising steps, lest our thoughts, by their own weight, fall into gross matter.

The Holy Spirit in great condescension reveals God to us, in expressions suitable to our capacity and conception; but the understanding must be attentive to correct the imagination, that we may not offend his majesty, and lessen his glory. In the text, the eternity of God is set forth, "his years shall have no end:" and he is styled, "the ancient of days:" which signify the unequal spaces of transient time, and are proper only to created things that have a successive duration, and are metaphorically attributed to God. Eternity that is proper to God, is a duration permanent, indivisible, and wholly present in itself. All the numbers of motion and measures of time are comprehended and lost in the vastness of eternity, as a few drops of rain that fall into the immense ocean. It is said of God, "he is, and was, and is to come." Rev. 1. 4. There is no past or future in God, but with respect to his works. Our Saviour declares, "I am the first, and the last;" wherein he attributes to himself a perfection truly and manifestly divine.

The absolute immutability of the divine nature is by a comparison declared in scripture: God is styled, "The Father of lights, in whom there is no variableness, nor shadow of change." Isa. 44. 6. The great luminary of heaven has various aspects, and appearances in its rising and meridian, and setting; is

changeable in its approaches and recesses from whence different shadows are cast: but the Father of lights has an invariable tenour of glory, he is without motion and mutation. God is absolutely exempt from all change in his nature, and from all accidental change. The reason of this is evident from the consideration of his necessary self-existence, and from the absolute simplicity of his being. Self-existenee is the intrinsical property of God's nature: he defines himself by it, "I am that I am." Exod. 3. He directs Moses to tell the Israelites, "I am hath sent me unto you." This and the wonder working rod were his credentials to authorize and dignify him in their esteem, and to induce them to believe his message. Jehovah, which is the same with I am, is the essential, supreme, and singular name of God, whereby he is distinguished from all created beings: it exhibits the clearest character of the Deity. There are other divine titles that signify particular attributes, but Jehovah declares his being from himself, independent upon any cause; his necessary eternal nature the root (if I may so speak) from which his perfections spring and flourish. All other things are from his causality; every spark of life, every degree of being is from him: but the most excelleht creatures compared to him, are but as dark shadows without reality. Therefore God assumes to himself, "I am, and there is none besides me." It is said the whole world compared to him, "is like a drop of the bucket to the sea, or the dust of the balance to the globe of the earth; nay, is less than nothing." There is a greater distance between God and the angels, than between the angels and their native nothing: for they have derived, and dependant, limited beings, but God is all perfection, all greatness and goodness from himself.

This necessary self-existence of God is the foundation of his immutability: thus he declares, "I am the Lord Jehovah, I change not:" Mal. 3. 6. he is necessarily and eternally himself, and all that he is, without the least change for a moment. Absolute necessity of existence invincibly infers the infinity of existence: for the limits of any being are determined by the productive cause of it. Of created beings some excel in one thing, some in another, according to the will of the Maker. Every change in the substance of things is either perfective or corruptive, and both are equally impossible in God. For nothing can

accrue to infinite perfection, and nothing can be wanting to it. Any accession to his excellency implies, there was a defect before, if any impairing, there would be a defect afterward: from hence it follows, either that he was not God before, or that he shall cease to be God afterward, it being absolutely impossible that any perfection be wanting in the true God.

The absolute simplicity of the divine nature does infer the immutability of it. It is true the perfections of God are expressed by different titles, and are apprehended by us under different conceptions, yet they are all the same infinite nature. There is no composition and mixture of wisdom, and power, and goodness in God, but he is all perfection in the unity of his essence.

Eternity is a resultance from his independent nature: for we cannot conceive of a being necessary in itself, but it must be eternal; "From everlasting to everlasting thou art God." Whatever is made is perishable, either from the principles of its composition, as the bodies of animals, which being made of jarring elements, die by natural expiration, or may be destroyed. The angels, though spiritual substances, are mortal to God, he can by a word annihilate them: nay, their immortality depends upon his power, the productive and conservative cause of their beings. 1 Tim. 6. He only has immortality, the inseparable perfection of his nature, and bestows it upon others.

The eternity of God is inseparably connexed with his immutability: for that being that cannot change, cannot cease to be. These attributes infer and illustrate one another. Those things which time bestows, it takes away: flowers that are of a springing accomplishment, gradually wither: but the sun shone with as much lustre and force the first day as ever since, and continues in its perfection. God was from eternity, and therefore is always the same in himself. He is not more powerful when he works, nor wise when he governs, nor more just when he punishes, nor more good when he bestows his benefits. The immutability of the divine nature is proper to every perfection: I will mention some of them.

The divine wisdom is so perfect there can be no addition to it. From eternity it fixed the best end of all things, the glory of the Creator; and appointed the fittest means to obtain it. His all-discerning eye with one imperious view comprehends all

events necessary and contingent. He sees all real effects, and all possible in himself: for he perfectly understands his own power, and his own will. To his co-eternal knowledge nothing is passed, or to come: nothing occurs new, or appears old.

The divine power is not capable of accession or diminution. "In the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength." It is a perfection inseparably inherent in his nature: "O Lord be exalted in thine own power. The Lord's arm is not shortened:" Psal. 21. without the least strain of his power he can do all things. We have a constant visible demonstration of the unchangeableness of these attributes: for the same infinite wisdom and power are requisite to manage the world as to make it. Without his directing light and supporting power, that frame of the world would disband, and the full harmony of it be turned into confusion. "He upholds all things by the word of his power." Heb. 11. The manner of sustaining and governing this great world, is as divine as the thing itself. For no less than infinite power can do things by a commanding word.

"The mercy of God endures for ever." This is renewed every morning and moment: it is from his never-failing compassions that we do not fail. This is our continual advocate to deprecate the evils we deserve, and obtains all good things for us. It is mercy supports and sweetens our lives, that are so frail, and so often forfeited. The unwasted treasure of mercy supplies our wants, satisfies our desires, allays our sorrows. The divine mercy vanquishes our fears, comforts us in the hour of death, and crowns us after it with everlasting life.

The holiness of God, the brightest ornament of his essence, is unchangeable: "it is without spot or wrinkle," that may stain its absolute purity. This is the radical, fundamental rule of order in the divine government. It is as impossible the will of God should decline from moral good, as that his understanding should not discern it. From hence our Saviour declares, "That heaven and earth shall pass away before the law shall be abolished." If the pillars of heaven should fall, and the foundations of the earth be overturned, there would be no loss to God: for by one act of his will he can create a new world; but if the law, the copy of his holiness, were altered or abrogated, it would be an imputation upon his holy nature, as if

it were arbitrary and mutable, and consequently he should cease to be God.

Briefly. Divine immutability is the full and constant state of perfections in the Deity. And the blessedness of God, that consists in the fruition of himself, has a necessary connexion with this attribute. Immutability is the ground that supports it, and the perfection that crowns it.

II. The church's hope in its extremity, is supported by the unchangeable perfections of his nature that establish his covenant with his people. It is styled, " an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure." This will be evident by considering the immutability of his counsels and decrees, and of his words and promises.

1. His counsels and decrees that concern the recovery of the church from its despised and desolate state. The unchangeable perfections of his nature are the foundation of his unchangeable decrees: for there can be no change of them from within, and no controlling of them from without. The perfection of his knowledge is such, that he can never be surprised with a sudden new event, that should induce him to alter them: and his power that is truly infinite will effect them. His decrees are expressed to be the " counsel of his will;" those determinations being most complete that are the product of counsel. There are no temporary decrees that begin upon an unforeseen emergency, for it would then follow, there were a change in God: but they were " before the foundation of the world," and shall be accomplished in real effects, either immediately by his own power, or by secondary means. " The counsel of the Lord shall stand." The decree of election, the original spring of all the good his people enjoy or expect, is of infallible accomplishment. It is the observation of * St. Austin, that although the number of the elect shall not be actually complete till the end of time, yet the apostle speaks of eternal predestination, as if it were finally accomplished already: " Whom he predestinated, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he jus-

* Adhuc usque in finem seculi multiplicandi & justificandi sunt: tamen verba præteriti temporis posuit de rebus etiam futuris, tanquam jam fecerit Deus, quæ jam ut fierent, ex æternitate disposuit.

tified, them he also glorified." For his eternal will, the product of his eternal love, can never be frustrated.

2. His "word endures for ever:" 2 Pet. 1. it is more stable than the centre. "The strength of Israel cannot lie; for he is not a man that he should repent." 1 Sam. 15. 29. The immutability of his nature gives firmness to his counsels, they are unretractable, and fidelity to his promises, they are inviolable. The apostle confirms believers in "the hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised." His truth is an attribute so glorious to him, that in the solemn proclaiming of him to the Israelites, it is peculiarly mentioned and placed next to the Deity, "The Lord thy God is God, the faithful God, that keeps covenant and mercy." Deut. 7. It is so sacred and dear to him, "that he magnifies his word above all his name." Therefore he revealed himself by the name Jehovah to Moses, which implied, he would be the same in performing as he was in promising; and accordingly by the miraculous strokes of his power delivered his people from the bondage of Egypt. This is the ground of the psalmist's confidence, "Thou O Lord shalt endure for ever, and thy remembrance unto all generations. Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Sion, for the time to favour her, the set time is come." Psal. 102. From the immutability of the essence of God, he infers the constancy of his promises, which declared by his prophets the fixed time of their restoration.

In short, by the covenant of God, his church is received into communion with him, and because he lives, it is impossible they should perish. In this the force of our Saviour's argument consists against the Sadducees, who denied the resurrection: "that Jehovah was the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob," therefore they should be raised to a glorious immortality.

The Application of the Point.

From hence we may understand the reason of the supreme and solemn adoration that all intelligent creatures are obliged to pay to God; it is for the absolute and unchangeable perfection of his nature, whereby he is infinitely superior and separate from all created beings. There are different degrees of excellency in the creatures, but in comparison with God they all

vanish and are equally nothing. As if one should be raised to the region of the stars, and cast a look down on the earth, the highest mountains with the vallies would appear an equal plain. God's incommunicable name is, "I am;" he is alone from himself infinite and immortal, and in propriety of speech he only is: all other beings are derived and dependant on him, and have but a countenance and shadow of being.

Let us consider men and angels, that in nature are more excellent than other creatures. The first man in the perfection of paradise was mutable, his natural life was in a continual flux, and to be preserved by the fruits of the garden. If he had persevered in his obedience, after a short immortality on earth, he had ascended to heaven alive in his entire person, but he must have been changed in his ascension, "for flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven." He had strength to stand, but was free to fall: and that freedom to evil was a branch of imperfection. There is a woful proof of this in his rebellious disobedience, for which he lost more in a day than his progeny can recover to all ages. The angels are superior spirits, yet "they were charged with folly," that is, a slipperiness and mutability from which God alone is entirely exempt. The elect angels, who continued faithful when such mighty numbers were false, and deserted their duty, (and fell from their original purity and glory) are not absolutely unchangeable: their confirmation and stability is from the continual irradiations and influences of divine grace, that preserve their minds from error, and their wills from irregular desires, and consequently they cannot sin, nor forfeit their felicity; for all sin proceeds from error in the mind, and disorder in the will.

In the perfection of glory the angels are not without change; their understandings and wills are variously tinctured and coloured by diversity of objects: their minds are illustrated with new discoveries of the divine counsels in their gradual accomplishment. The apostle tells us, "unto principalities and powers is made known by the church the manifold wisdom of God." Eph. 3. 10. With the intellectual change their wills receive new impressions of joy. At the incarnation of our Saviour a chorus of angels sang with celestial harmony. "Glory to God on high, on earth peace, good will towards men." Luke 15. At the conversion of a sinner there is new joy among those

blessed spirits: but the blessed God is always the same. It is from the consideration of God's peerless excellencies that the glorious seraphims are for ever in a posture of lowest reverence before the throne, and magnify him by the transcendent title that separates him from all creatures of the highest order, "Holy, holy, holy Lord God of Hosts: the earth is full of thy glory." The most proper affection due to that infinitely excelling object, is admiration mixed with humble fear.

2. This should confirm our trust "in God at all times." The psalmist's induction is from hence, "Thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end. The children of thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before thee." We will consider this security of the church in the present and future state.

1st. While the church is in this lower world the sphere of mutability. The first sin of Adam opened a passage to innumerable evils, that either oppress us, or are impendent over us: "Man at his best estate is altogether vanity:" Psal. 39. not only when languishing and wasting by diseases, when afflicted by disasters, but in his fairest flower and best vigour. Nay, the higher his exaltations in this world, the more he is exposed to the storms of mutability. How shall man, a creature so impotent and apprehensive of dangers, compose the disorder of his passions? How shall he support his spirit in an unsafe and unquiet condition? The present world, as it is insufficient for our satisfaction, so it cannot afford us protection: it cannot fill the immensity of our desires, nor extend to the eternity of our duration, nor preserve us from afflictions here. The seeming felicity here is like a feast in an empty dream, mere imaginary food, and vanishes in a little while. What then can quiet our fears under imminent evils? what can revive and support our hopes in our distress and exigencies but the unchangeable God, whose love, and power, and truth, are everlasting? Therefore we are encouraged "to trust in the Lord for ever, because in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength." He sits in heaven, his throne is unshaken, when things below are whirled about in a vertiginous circle. Creatures may promise us relief in our troubles, but they are so false or fading, that we shall be deceived in our reliance on them, and disappointment will increase our vexa-

tion; yet our carnal constitution strongly inclines us to depend upon them, either for the obtaining what we desire, or for the preventing what we fear: the reason is, because we see things with the eyes of flesh, and accordingly esteem their strength and sufficiency as it is visible to us. Therefore we are so often directed "not to put our trust in princes, nor in the sons of men, in whom there is no help: his breath goeth forth, he returns to his earth, in that very day his thoughts perish. They are distinguished from others in the quality of living, but are under the same hard and inflexible necessity of dying. They cannot retain one ray of the superficial lustre of their crowns, to enlighten the dark shadow of death: they carry no relics of majesty into the next world, to impress a reverence upon others. "All flesh is grass, and the glory of it as the flower of grass: the grass withers, and the flowers thereof fade; but the word of the Lord endureth for ever." God is our living strength, a sure refuge to which we may fly in our extremities. He can compose a raging world, or preserve his church in it, as he did the ark in the universal deluge. The prophet alledges this reason of his confidence, "Art not thou from everlasting, O Lord my God, mine holy one? we shall not die." And accordingly the prophet Jeremiah argues; "Thou O Lord remainest for ever, thy throne is from generation to generation! Wherefore dost thou forget us for ever, and forsake us so long time?" Lam. 5. 19, 20.

2dly. In the next state we shall be unchangeably happy in his influxive presence. Here there are many vicissitudes, strange and sudden prosperity and adversity, riches and poverty, health and sickness in the circulation of time succeed one another: as in a voyage, the change of the winds, sometimes a storm, and after a calm, the unquiet agitation of the ship, the sickness of the passengers, are accidents that happen to those who sail in the ocean: but when they arrive at the port, all is at an end. Thus when we shall come to heaven, all the variations of time shall end in a permanent stable state: our blessedness shall exceed all our desires, and exclude all our fears: it shall be complete and surrounded with eternity. "There God is all in all."

The text I have been discoursing of, is very applicable to the

occasion; for we are instructed by very afflicting experience how fallacious our hopes are, that depend upon dying creatures. The excellent queen, from whose inclination and power the kingdom expected such diffusive good, and for a long continuance, was in the prime and vigour of her age taken from us.

How convincingly verified are the words of the wise preacher, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity. Those who are styled gods by deputation and vicegerency, and children of the Most High, shall die like men:" Psal. 82. 6, 7. they are made of the same frail materials, and liable to the same accidents with the lowest of the people.

That we may have a due sense of our heavy loss, I shall endeavour sincerely and briefly to represent what she was, and what a blessing we enjoyed in her government.

I know that the praising of the dead is usually suspected to be guilty of flattery, either in disguising their real faults, or in adorning them with counterfeit virtues, and such praises are pernicious to the living. The temptation to excess in this kind is never so dangerous as in the funeral encomiums of princes. The most regular discretion is requisite in managing such subjects: flaunting language, and high sounding words the more poetical, are less persuasive, for they seem to proceed from a vain ostentation of eloquence. The discovery of the paint of art in a funeral sermon defeats the end of it, for it lessens the credit of the speaker, and the esteem of the person spoken of. The suspicion that more is said than is true, induces a thought that there is less praise-worthy than there is. But when the excellent goodness of a person in a uniform tenor of life was illustriously visible, the naked narrative of her actions will be a more effectual amplification of her worth and praise, than the most lively and graceful colours of language can impart.

Before I proceed, it is necessary to consider two acts of divine providence concerning the queen, that are eminently observable, and were principal ingredients in our miraculous deliverance.

The first is, that she was not early engaged in the belief and practice of popery, a religion so contrary to reason and divine revelation. Children before they come to the free exercise of reason, are very receptive of the first impressions: especially the instruction of parents enter with authority and efficacy into the

minds, and more especially if they partake from them as the secondary authors, not only life, but high honour and riches. There is the clearest evidence of this, for in all nations children receive their religion from the quality of their parents. Now it is truly wonderful, that the queen's father being so amorous of his religion, did not take the season of instilling it into her, before she could with understanding make a choice of it. It increases the wonder, in that the priests were attendants in his court, who being deeply struck with superstition, are watchful to take all advantages to propagate it. If she had been tainted with it, how unhappy had it been to herself, how pernicious to others? "If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness?" Popery is a religion that begins in inward darkness, and leads to utter darkness. If her mind had been prepossessed with so dangerous errors, how hard to have represented truth convincingly to her? The wool that has imbibed a dark tincture, can never receive a lighter colour: the change of inclinations that are deeply set in the will is very hard, and the change of opinions concerning religion that have first possessed the mind, is equally if not more difficult. How pernicious had it been to others? For the corrupting the mind of a royal person with a false religion, is like poisoning a public fountain, that conveys infection abroad. How admirable was the preventing mercy of God, that as soon as she was capable, she was instructed in the knowledge of the saving truth; and that her mind and heart were so firm and fixed in it, that she was neither seduced nor terrified from it. This preventing grace was an illustrious mark of her election.

2. The disposal of her in marriage to a prince of the reformed religion, raised by God to oppose the proud aspirer, and check the current of his fury, who usurps the glory of heaven, and breaks the peace of the earth; who arrogates a sovereignty over conscience, and has compelled such vast numbers to abjure the truth: whose infamous ambition has turned Europe into a stage of bloody confusion. Our serenity and tranquillity, the flourishing of peace and truth, are from the benevolent aspect and favourable influence of these two bright stars in conjunction.

I shall in speaking of this excellent queen, not insist on the privileges in the order of nature that eminently distinguished her

from others. Her descent was royal: but this is only an external circumstance, and derives no moral value to a person. The splendour of extraction, like varnish in a picture that gives more life and lustre to the colours, makes the virtues or the vices of a person more conspicuous.

Her body was the beautiful temple of a fairer soul: her graceful presence inspired reverence and love in those who saw her, and appeared worthy of empire. But visible beauty is often joined with foul deformity in the same person.

I shall begin with her piety towards God. This is the first duty of man in order and dignity, and the most considerable in its consequences: it is the foundation of all royal virtues. In the public worship of God, she was a bright example of solemn and unaffected devotion. She prayed with humble reverence, heard the word with respectful silence, and with serious application of spirit, as duly considering the infinite interval between the supremacy of heaven and princes on earth: that their greatness in its lustre is but a faint and vanishing reflection of the divine majesty. One instance I shall specify in this kind: when her residence was at the Hague, a lady of noble quality coming to the court to wait on her on a saturday in the afternoon, was told she was retired from all company, and kept a fast in preparation for the receiving the sacrament the next day. The lady staying till five o'clock, the princess came out, and contented herself with a very slender supper, it being incongruous to conclude a fast with a feast. Thus solemnly she prepared herself for spiritual communion with her Saviour. When Moses was surprised at the sight of the flaming bush, and intended to come near to it, he was warned by a voice from heaven, "Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from thy feet, for the place wherein thou standest is holy ground." By the familiar figure of putting off the shoes, is signified the purifying ourselves from all defilements. And certainly the presence of the Son of God is more peculiar in that sacred mysterious ordinance, than it was in the burning bush; accordingly we should sanctify ourselves, and approach with holy fear.

Her religion was not confined to the chapel, but every day she had chosen hours for communion with God, of which he is the only discerner and rewarder. Some that are high in the world, think it sufficient to pay a complimental visit to God

once a week, and content themselves with the external service, though destitute of holy affections, which are the life of religion, or at best are satisfied with a few expiring acts of devotion: but the good queen's conversation was in heaven, she was constant in those duties wherein the soul ascends to God by solemn thoughts and ardent desires, and God descends into the soul by the excitations and influences of his Spirit.

Her religion was not only exercised in divine worship, but was influential into her practice. 'The law of God was written in her heart, and transcribed in her life in the fairest characters.'

She had a sincere zeal for the healing our unhappy divisions in religious things, and declared her resolution upon the first address of some ministers, that she would use all means for that blessed end. She was so wise as to understand the difference between matters doctrinal, and rituals; and so good as to allow a just liberty for dissenters in things of small moment. She was not fettered with superstitious scruples, but her clear and free spirit was for the union of christians in things essential to christianity. One thing I shall specify: which though small in itself, yet as an indication of the freedom of her mind, deserving remembrance. A person of eminent worth, who was in waiting, observing the disturbance that was made by bringing in the pulpit at the end of the service, represented to her that the fixing of the pulpit would prevent much disorder: but signified, that custom would be alledged, and the altering of it opposed as a novelty. To which the prudent queen replied, if it be convenient, the convenience of the alteration would continue, and the objection of novelty would vanish. This revives in me the sorrowful remembrance of the late excellent archbishop, though in place incomparably inferior to the queen; their principles and temper, their designs and endeavours were for peace: and the hopes of obtaining it are weakened by the fatal conjuncture of their funerals.

The holiness of her life was universal. She was born and lived in the court that shines in pomp and flows in pleasures, and presents charming temptations to all the diseased appetites. Pride that destroyed both worlds, and cleaves so close to human nature, reigns there. The love of pleasure is a soft seducer, that easily insinuates through the senses, and captivates the soul.

It is an observation of St. Chrysostom that the preserving the three Hebrew martyrs unpolluted in the court of Babylon, was a greater miracle than the preserving them unsinged in the fiery furnace. In the absence of temptations the corrupt nature is sometimes so concealed that it is hardly known to itself; but when tempting objects armed with allurements offer themselves, the corrupt nature is presently discovered: especially if a person comes to the licence of the sceptre, that swells pride, and authorizes the exorbitant desires. To be humble in such a high elevation, to be temperate in the midst of the freest fruitions, is the effect of powerful grace. Who ever saw in the queen an appearance of pride and disdain? How graceful was the condescendence of her greatness? Who saw any disorder in her countenance, the chrystal wherein the affections are visible? Her breast was like the pacific sea, that seldom suffers and is disturbed by a storm. She was so exempt from the tyranny of the angry passions, that we may have some conjecture of the felicity of the state of unstained innocence, of which one ray is so amiable. She was so abhorring from the sensual passions, that nothing impure durst approach her presence.

In her relation to the king she was the best pattern of conjugal love and obsequiousness. How happy was her society, redoubling his comforts, and dividing his cares? Her deportment was becoming the dignity and dearness of the relation. Of this we have the most convincing proof from the testimony and tears of the king since her death. Solomon adds to many commendations of a virtuous woman, as a coronis, that her husband praises her. The king's declaring, that in all her conversation he discovered no fault, and his unfeigned and deep sorrow for his loss, are the queen's entire elogy.

She had an excellent understanding that qualified her for government. Of this her presiding in council in times of danger, and preserving the tranquillity of the kingdom, were real proofs.

Her charity, that celestial grace, was like the sun, nothing within her circuit was hid from its refreshing heat. Love is the clearest notion we have of the Deity: "God is love." A prince in no perfection resembles God more than in his communicative goodness. I will mention one act of her pious charity, and the noble manner of doing it. A lord of great honour and

piety proposed to her a very good work that was chargeable: she ordered a hundred pounds should be paid to him for it. Some time interposing before the receipt of the money, he waited upon the queen, and pleasantly told her, that interest was due for the delay of payment: she presently ordered, that fifty pounds more should be given, which was done accordingly. If it were known what this good queen did, and what she designed to do, among all her reluctant virtues, charity would be illustrious.

Her wise redemption of time from unconcerning vanities for domestic affairs, was the effect and indication of her tender and vigilant conscience. She considered her glass was continually running, and all the sands were to be accounted for. How should this great example correct those who are lavish of nothing so much as of time; which, being lost, is irrecoverable? The sun returns every day, but time never returns.

In her sickness, 'Patience had its perfect work.' her disease was uncomfortable, yet with resigned submission she bore it. When the danger of it was signified to her, she had no fearful thoughts about her future state. It is a cruel respect to sick persons, especially to princes, to conceal from them their danger till death steals insensibly upon them. Indeed consider their past lives, and their present anxieties, the advice of approaching death is an anticipation of it. But the spirit of this excellent saint 'was not afraid of evil-tidings, but fixed, trusting in the Lord.' Her care had been to secure the love of God in the best time of her life, this mixed cordial drops in the bitterness of death.

In short, to finish my discourse, all the blessed virtues were eminently seen in her that might render her government an entire happiness to the kingdom. This erected her a throne in the hearts of her subjects: and the honour the wise poet attributes to the emperor Augustus:

Victorque volentes
Per populos dat jura.

That he ruled a willing people, may more truly be said of this excellent princess, she was queen of the affections of the people, and governed them without constraint. Her praiseworthy ac-

tions will eternize her memory, when other princes, divested of their secular pomp, shall either be buried in dark oblivion, or condemned in history.

The earthen vessel wherein all these treasures were deposited is broke, and the instructive providence should persuade us to look to our living strength, the blessed God, fixing our trust in him. He bestowed this rare instrument of his goodness: he can preserve his servant, our sovereign lord, who by the divine assistance has the honour of establishing our religion and liberties at home, and gives hope of restoring it abroad, from whence it has been so cruelly and perfidiously expelled.

THE

ADDRESS OF CONDOLENCE

TO

HIS MAJESTY,

BY THE DISSENTING MINISTERS.

May it please your Majesty,

THOUGH we come in the rear of the train of mourners, to pay our tributary tears for the invaluable loss in the death of your royal consort, and our most gracious Queen, yet our resentments of it are with as tender a sympathy as are in the breasts of any of your subjects. This gives the sharpest accent to our passions, that the considerations which are most proper and powerful to allay our sorrows, exasperate them: for while we remem-

ber what she was, how general and diffusive a blessing to three kingdoms, the severe stroke of providence in taking her from us, is most afflicting. Such a concurrence of high perfection shined in her person and actions, that would have made her illustrious in a low condition; and in her exalted station they were attractive of the eyes and admiration of all. Her mind was above the temptations that attend the throne. Majesty was mixed with that condescending humility, that tender and beneficent goodness, that she was easily accessible to all for their relief and support. Her piety and purity were so conspicuous, her affections were so composed and temperate, that the court, that is usually the centre of vanity and voluptuousness, became virtuous by the impression of her example. Her conversation was so regular, that her enemies (if goodness in such a bright eminency had any) could not fasten a taint upon her. Her royal endowment for government, wisdom, magnanimity, vigilance and care in managing affairs of state (without which the highest princes are but civil idols, useless and unprofitable to the world) these were in such a degree of excellency, that in your Majesty's constrained absence, while you were defending the interest of Christendom, against a

potent enemy abroad, with the sword of war, she sweetly ordered all things at home with the sceptre of peace. She is gone, and must return no more: O astonishing grief! But it becomes us with humble submission to acquiesce in the divine disposal. The will of God is always directed by infinite wisdom, and is the rule of goodness. We must refresh our sorrows with the hope that she is entered into her Saviour's joy, whom she imitated and honoured, and that she is made happy in the love of God and the light of his countenance for ever.

We humbly beseech your Majesty to accept the renewed assurances of our inviolable and constant fidelity, to your person and government; and that we shall influence all that are within our compass to persevere in their duty: we shall earnestly pray to the blessed God to keep you in the best protection, his encompassing favour, to support your spirit with divine comforts, and to continue long your precious life, so necessary for preserving the pure religion, and the civil rights of this kingdom.

A

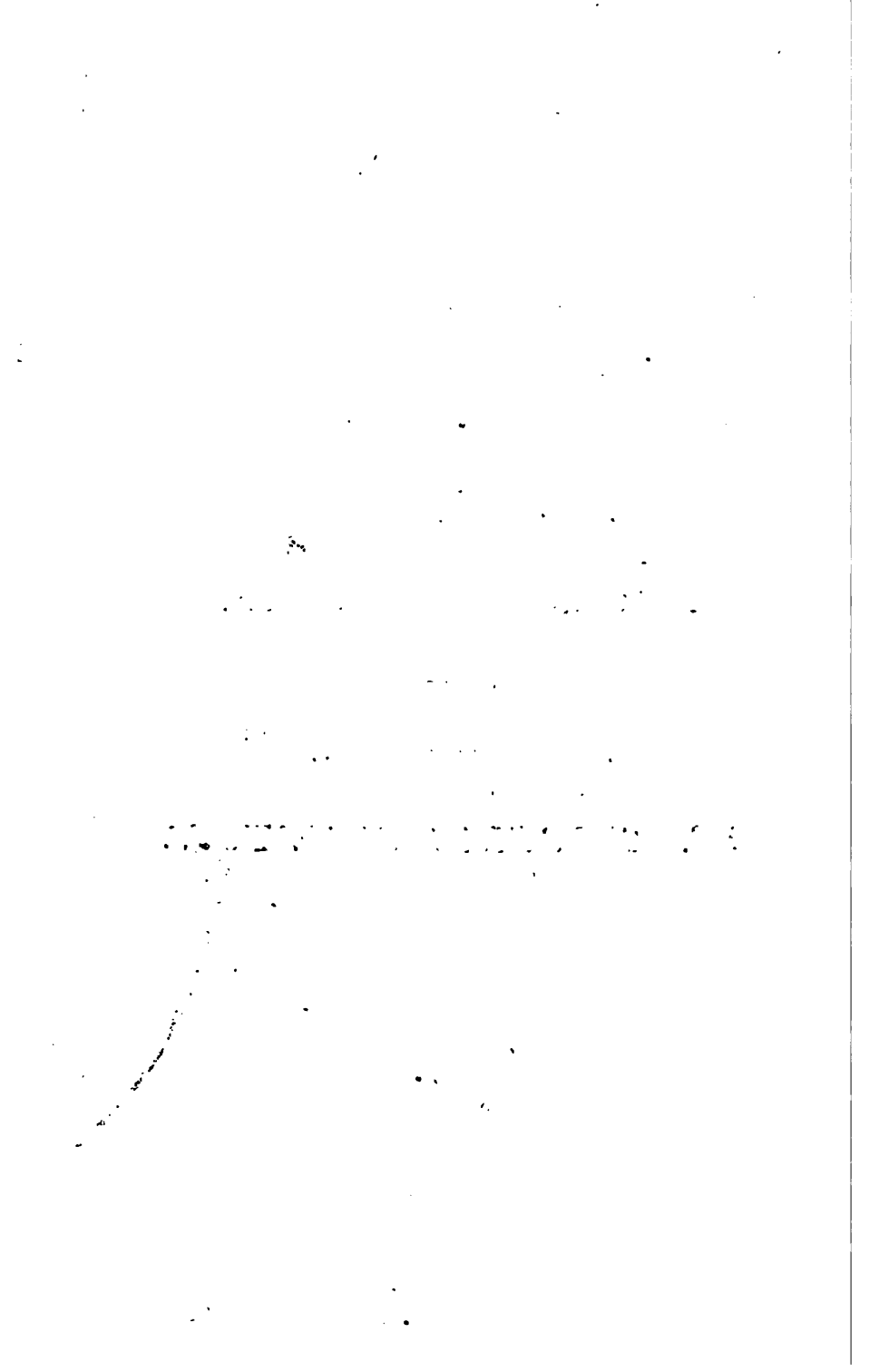
SERMON

PREACHED AT THE FUNERAL

OF THE

REVEREND & EXCELLENT DIVINE

DR. THOMAS MANTON.



A

SERMON, &c.

1 THESS. iv. 17. *the last clause.*

——— And so shall we ever be with the Lord.

THE words are a consolation, brought by the apostle from the third heaven, where he was by extraordinary privilege raised, and saw and understood how great a happiness it is to be with Christ. And they are addressed to believers, to moderate and allay their sorrows for the death of those saints, who by their conjunction in blood or friendship were most dear to them. Thus he speaks in the 13th verse, "I would not have you be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not as others which have no hope." The heathens, that were strangers to a future state, and thought that after a short course through the world, mankind would be lost for ever in the dead sea, might with some pretence abandon themselves to the extremity of their passions. But christians, to "whom life and immortality are revealed by the gospel; who believe, that as Jesus died and rose again; so all that sleep in Jesus, that persevere in faith and holiness to the end, God will bring with him,

are forbid upon the most weighty reasons, to indulge their grief in excess. The union between Christ and believers is inviolable; and from thence it follows, they shall be partakers with him in his glory. The soul immediately after death "shall be with Christ." Whilst the body reposes in the grave, it is in his presence who is life and light, and has a vital joyful rest in communion with him. And in the appointed time the bodies of the saints, those happy spoils, shall be rescued from the dark prison of the grave, and be sharers with their souls in immortal glory.

This consummate happiness of the saints, the apostle assures from the highest authority, "the word of the Lord;" and describes his glorious appearance, so as to make the strongest impression on our minds. "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive, and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord." Then death, the last enemy, so fearful and feared by men, shall be destroyed. And the captive prince of the world, with all the powers of darkness, and all other rebellious sinners that obstinately joined with him, shall be brought in chains before his dreadful tribunal: and after the great act of the universal judgment shall be completed, then all the saints shall make their triumphant entry with the Captain of their salvation, into his kingdom, and "shall ever be with the Lord."

The general proposition from the words is this; The saints after the resurrection shall be completely and eternally happy in the presence of Christ.

To make this supernatural blessedness more easy and intelligible to us, the scripture describes it by sensible representations. For whilst the soul is clothed with flesh, fancy has such a dominion, that we can conceive of nothing but by comparisons and images taken from material things. It is therefore set forth by a feast, and a kingdom, to signify the joy and glory of that state. But to prevent all gross conceits; it tells us that the bodies of the saints shall be spiritual, not capable of hunger and thirst, nor consequently of any refreshment that is caused by the satisfaction of those appetites. The objects of the most noble

senses, seeing and hearing, the pleasure of which is mixed with reason, and not common to the brutes, are more frequently made use of to reconcile that glorious state to the proportion of our minds. Thus sometimes the blessed are represented placed "on thrones with crowns on their heads;" sometimes "clothed in white, with palms in their hands;" sometimes singing songs of triumph "to him that sits on the throne," and to their Saviour. But the reality of this blessedness infinitely exceeds all those faint metaphors. Heaven is lessened by comparisons from earthly things. The apostle who was dignified with the revelation of the successes that shall happen to the church till time shall be no more, tells us, "It does not appear what we shall be" in eternity. "The things that God has prepared for those that love him," are far more above the highest ascent of our thoughts, than the marriage feast of a great prince exceeds in splendour and magnificence the imagination of one that has always lived in an obscure village, and never saw any ornaments of state, nor tasted wine in his life. We can think of those things but according to the poverty of our understandings. But so much we know that is able to sweeten all the bitterness, and render insipid all the sweetness of this world.

This will appear by considering, that whatever is requisite to constitute the perfect blessedness of man, is fully enjoyed in the divine presence.

1. An exemption from all evils, is the first condition of perfect blessedness. The sentence of wise Solon is true in another sense than he intended,

———Dicique beatus
Ante obitum nemo, supremaq; funera debet.

No man can be named happy whilst in this valley of tears. But upon the entrance into heaven, all those evils that by their number, variety, or weight, disquiet and oppress us, are at an end.

Sin, of all evils the most hateful, shall be abolished. And all temptations that surround us, and endanger our innocence, shall cease. Here the best men lament the weakness of the flesh, and sometimes the violent assaults of spiritual enemies. St. Paul himself breaks forth into a mournful complaint, "O

wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?" And when harassed with the buffetings of satan, renews his most earnest addresses to God to be freed from them. Here our purity is not absolute, we must be always cleansing ourselves from the relics of that deep defilement that cleaves to our nature. Here our peace is preserved with the sword in our hand, by a continual warfare against satan and the world. But in heaven no ignorance darkens the mind, no passions rebel against the sanctified will, no inherent pollution remains. The church is "without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing." And all temptations that "war against the soul," shall then cease. The tempter was cast out of heaven, and none of his poisoned arrows can reach that purified company. Glorious liberty! here ardently desired, but fully enjoyed by the sons of God above.

And as sin, so all the penal consequences of it are quite taken away. The present life is an incurable disease, and sometimes attended with that sharp sense that death is desired as a remedy, and accepted as a benefit. And though the saints have reviving cordials, yet their joys are mixed with sorrows, nay, caused by sorrows. The tears of repentance are their sweetest refreshment. Here the living stones are cut and wounded, and made fit by sufferings for a temple unto God in the new Jerusalem. But as in the building of Solomon's temple the noise of a hammer was not heard, for all the parts were framed before with that exact design and correspondence, that they firmly combined together. They were hewn in another place, and nothing remained but the putting them one upon another in the temple; and then as sacred, they were inviolable. So God, the wise architect, having prepared the saints here by many cutting afflictions, places them in the eternal building, where no voice of sorrow is heard. Of the innumerable company above, is there any eye that weeps, any breast that sighs, any tongue that complains, or appearance of grief? The heavenly state is called life, as only worthy of that title. There is no infirmity of body, no poverty, no disgrace, no treachery of friends, no persecution of enemies. "There is no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying, nor shall there be any more pain: for former things are passed away." Rev. 21. 4. God "will wipe away all tears from the eyes of his people." Their salvation is complete

in all degrees. Pure joy is the privilege of heaven, unmixed sorrows the punishment of hell.

A concurrence of all positive excellencies is requisite to blessedness. And these are to be considered with respect to the entire man.

1. The body shall be awaked out of its dead sleep, and quickened into a glorious, and immortal life. The soul and body are the essential parts of man; and though the inequality be great in their operations that respect holiness, yet their concourse is necessary. Good actions are designed by the counsel and resolution of the spirit, but performed by the ministry of the flesh. Every grace expresses itself in visible actions by the body. In the sorrows of repentance it supplies tears, in fastings its appetites are restrained, in thanksgivings the tongue breaks forth into the joyful praises of God. All the victories over sensible pleasure and pain are obtained by the soul in conjunction with the body. Now it is most becoming the divine goodness not to deal so differently, that the soul should be everlastingly happy, and the body lost in forgetfulness; the one glorified in heaven, the other remain in the dust. From their first setting out in the world to the grave they ran the same race, and shall enjoy the same reward. Here the body is the consort of the soul in obedience and sufferings, hereafter in fruition. When the crown of purity, or palm of martyrdom shall be given by the great Judge in the view of all, they shall both partake in the honour. Of this we have an earnest in the resurrection of Christ in his true body, who "is the firstfruits of them that sleep." 1 Cor. 15. "He shall change our vile bodies, that they may be fashioned like to his glorious body, according to the working of his power, whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself." Phil. 3. 21. A substantial unfading glory will shine in them infinitely above the perishing pride of this world, that is but in appearance, like the false colours painted on the feathers of a dove by the reflection of the light, which presently vanish, when it changeth its posture, or the light is withdrawn. Indeed what can be more glorious than to be conformed to the humanity of Christ, the seat of all beauty and perfection. This conformity shall be the work of his own hands. And when omnipotence interposes, nothing is difficult. The raising the body to an unchangeable state of glory, is as easy to the divine power, as the

forming it at the first in the womb. As the sun labours no more in the mines in the forming of gold and silver, the most precious and durable metals, than in the production of a poor short lived flower.

II. The soul shall be made perfect in all its faculties.

1. The understanding shall clearly see the most excellent objects. "Now we know but in part," 1 Cor. 13. The naked beauty of divine things is veiled, and of impossible discovery. And the weakness of the mind is not proportionable to their dazzling brightness. But when that which is perfect is come, "then that which is in part shall be done away." In that enlightened state, the glorious manifestation of the objects shall as much exceed the clearest revealing of them here, as the sun in its full lustre, one beam of light strained through a crevice in the wall. And the understanding shall be prepared to take a full view of them. Therefore the apostle compares the several periods of the church, in respect of the degrees of knowledge, to the several ages of this life. "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things." In children the organs, either from an excess of moisture, or their smallness, are indisposed for the vigorous exercise of the mind: some strictures of reason appear, a presaging sign what will be, but mixed with much obscurity. But when the organs are come to their just proportion and temperament, the soul displays its strength and activity.

All things of a supernatural order shall then be clearly discovered. The contrivance of our salvation, the ways of conducting us to blessedness, which are objects of a sublime nature, will afford an exquisite pleasure to the understanding. All the secrets of our redemption shall be unsealed. "The great mystery of godliness," the incarnation of the eternal Son, and his according justice with mercy, shall then be apparent. The divine counsels in governing the world, are now only visible in their wonderful effects, either of mercy or justice, and those most dreadful; but the reasons of them are past finding out. But what our Saviour said to Peter, "What I do, thou knowest not now, but shalt know hereafter," is applicable to these impenetrable dispensations. All the original fountains of wisdom, as clear as deep, shall then be opened. We shall then see the

beauty of providence in disposing temporal things in order to our eternal felicity. We now see as it were the rough part, and knots of that curious embroidery: but then the whole work shall be unfolded, the sweetness of the colours, and proportion of the figures appear. There we shall be able to expound the perplexing riddle, how "out of the eater came meat, and out of the strong came sweetness." "For we shall know as we are known."

"We shall see God." Our Saviour tells us, "This is life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." The beginning and perfection of our happiness consists in this knowledge. The Deity is spiritual and invisible to the eye of the body, infinite and incomprehensible to the soul. But we shall then so clearly understand the divine perfections, that our present knowledge compared to that, is but as the seeing a dark resemblance in a glass, to the clear view of a person in the native beauty of his face. God is most gloriously present in heaven. For according to the degrees of excellence in the work, such are the impressions and discoveries of the virtues of the cause. Now all sensible things in the low order of nature, are but weak resultances from his perfections, in comparison of their illustrious effects in the divine world. The glories of the place, and of the inhabitants, the angels and saints, clearly express his majesty, goodness and power. But in a transcendent manner he exhibits himself in the glorified Mediator. He is styled "the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person;" not only for his equal perfections in respect of the unity of their nature, but to signify that God in the person of the incarnate Mediator is so fully represented to us, that by the sight of him we see God himself in his unchangeable excellencies. This appears by the following words, that "having purged us from our sins, he sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;" for they respect the Son of God as united to the human nature, in which he performed the office of the priesthood, and took possession of his glorious kingdom. During his humble state, the divine virtues, wisdom, goodness, holiness, power, were so visible in his person, life, revelations, and miraculous works, that when Philip so longed for the sight of the Father as the only consummate blessedness, "Show us the Father, and it suffices;" he told him, "he that has seen

me, has seen the Father also." But how brightly do they appear in his triumphant exaltation. It was his prayer on earth; "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory." Inestimable felicity! Whether we consider him in the respect of an object, that incomparably transcends all the created glory of heaven, or in the relation of our head, on a double account; partly because he was debased into the form of a servant, and suffered all indignities and cruelties of sinners for us, has received the recompence of his meritorious sufferings, the triumph of his victory, "being glorified with the Father with the glory he had before the world was;" and partly because every member shall be conformed to him in his glory; "we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." And all felicity and glory is comprised in that promise. The sight of the face of Moses when radiant, had no transforming efficacy; for the light of it was not in him as its source, but by derivation. But God is light essentially, and the sight of his perfections will be productive of his likeness in us, so far as it may be in a restrained subject. When our Saviour was upon the holy mount, and one vanishing beam of glory appeared in his transfiguration, Peter was so transported at the sight, that he forgot the world and himself. How ravishing then will the sight of him be in his triumphant majesty, when we shall be transfigured ourselves!

2. As we shall behold God's face, know his most amiable excellencies; so they shall love him as perfectly as they know him. To the illustrations of the mind, there are correspondent impressions on the heart. In the present state our love is imperfect, and as fire out of its sphere, dies away, by our neglect to feed it with proper materials, enamouring considerations of God. But it is not so in heaven: there the divine sun attracts every eye with the light of its beauty, and inflames every heart with the heat of his love. The continual presence of God is in different respects the cause and effect of our love to him. For there is no more powerful attractive to love him, than to see him; and love keeps the thoughts undivided from him. "God is love," and will kindle in us a pure affection that eternity shall never lessen.

Our affections that are now scattered on many things, wherein some small reflections of his goodness appear, shall join in one

full current in heaven, where "God is all in all." We shall then understand the riches of his love, that God who is infinitely happy in himself, should make man for such a glory, and such a glory for man. And that when for his rebellion he was justly expelled from paradise, and under a sentence of eternal death, God should please to restore him to his favour, and to give him a better state than was forfeited. We shall then understand our infinite obligations to the Son of God, who descended from the heaven of heavens to our earth; and which is more, from the majesty wherein he there reigned, from the glory wherein he was visible to the angelical minds, and became man for men, redemption for the lost, to purchase immortal life for those who were dead to that blessed life. In short, then God will express his love to us in the highest degrees that a finite creature is capable to receive from love itself, and we shall love him with all the strength of our glorified powers.

3. Complete satisfaction flows from union with God by knowledge and love. "In his presence is fulness of joy, at his right hand are pleasures for ever." The causes and excellencies of the heavenly life are in those words expressed. The causes are the influxive presence of God, the revelation of his attractive perfections, the beholding his face, the declaration of his peculiar favour. This our blessed Lord himself had a respect to, as the complete reward of his sufferings: "Thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance." And his "right hand," his bounty, that dispenses, and power that secures that felicity. The excellencies of this state are fulness of joy, and that without diminution, or end.

When the soul opens its eyes to the clear discoveries of the first truth, and its breast to the dear intimate embraces of the Supreme Good, beyond which nothing remains to be known, nothing to be enjoyed, what a deluge of the purest pleasures will overflow it? We cannot ascend in our thoughts so high, as to conceive the excess of joy that attends those operations of the glorified soul upon its proper object. But something we may conjecture.

(1.) Those who are possessed with a noble passion for knowledge, how do they despise all lower pleasures in comparison of it? How do they forget themselves, neglect the body, and retire into the mind, the highest part of man, and nearest to God?

The bare apprehension of such things that by their internal nature have no attractive influence upon the affections, is pleasant to the understanding. As the appearance of light, though not attended with any other visible beauties, refreshes the eye after long darkness: so the clear discovery of truths, how abstract soever, that were before unknown, is grateful to the intellective faculty. Thus some have been strangely transported with the pleasures of a mathematical demonstration, when the evidence, not the importance of the thing was so ravishing: for what is more dry and barren of delight than the speculation of figures and numbers? Solon when near his end, and some of his friends that visited him were speaking softly of a point of philosophy, by a sound of wisdom was awakened from the sleep of death that was just seizing on him, and opening his eyes, and raising his head to give attention; being asked the reason of it? Answered, 'That when * I understand what you are discoursing of, I may die.' Such was his delight in knowledge, that a little of it made his agony insensible. But here are many imperfections that lessen this intellectual pleasure, which shall cease in heaven. Here the acquisition of knowledge is often with the expence of health: the flower of the spirits, necessary for natural operations, is wasted by intense thoughts. How often are the learned sickly? As the flint when it is struck, gives not a spark without consuming itself; so knowledge is obtained by studies that waste our faint sensitive faculties. But then our knowledge shall be a free emanation from the spring of truth, without our labour and pains. Here we learn by circuit, and discern by comparing things; our ignorance is dispelled by a gradual succession of light: but then universal knowledge shall be infused in a moment. Here after all our labour and toil, how little knowledge do we gain? Every question is a labyrinth, out of which the nimblest and most searching minds cannot extricate themselves. How many specious errors impose upon our understandings? We look on things by false lights, through deceiving spectacles: but then our knowledge shall be certain and complete. There is no forbidden tree in the celestial paradise, as no inordinate affection. But suppose that all

* Ut cum istud quicquid est de quo disputatis percepero, moriar. *Val. Max.*

things in the compass of the world were known, yet still there would be emptiness and anguish in the mind: for the most comprehensive knowledge of things that are insufficient to make us happy, cannot afford true satisfaction. But then we shall see God in all his excellencies, the supreme object and end, the only felicity of the soul. How will the sight of his glory personally shining in our Redeemer, in the first moment quench our extreme thirst, and fill us with joy and admiration? It is not as the naked conception of treasures, that only makes rich in ideas, but that divine sight gives a real interest in him. The angels are so ravished with the beauties and wonders of his face, that they never divert a moment from the contemplation of it.

(2.) The pure love of the saints to God is then fully satisfied. Love considered as an affection of friendship, is always attended with two desires; to be assured of reciprocal love, and to enjoy the conversation of the person beloved, the testimony of his esteem and good-will. This kind of * affection seems to be inconsistent with that infinite distance that is between God and the creature. But though it is disproportionable to the divine majesty, it is proportionable to his goodness. Accordingly our Saviour promises, "He that loves me, shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him." And to confirm our belief of this astonishing condescension, repeats it, "If a man love me, my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and make our abode with him." In the present state, the signs of God's special favour are exhibited to his friends. Now he bestows on them the honour of being his sons, the graces and comforts of his Spirit, the precious earnests of his love, and 'Seal of their redemption.' But in eminency of degrees, the effects of his love are incomparably more glorious in heaven. Here the saints are adopted, there crowned. There he opens all the bright treasures of his wisdom, the riches of his goodness, the beauties of his holiness, the glories of his power, and by the intimate application of his presence, makes his love most sensible to them. O the mutual delights between God and glorified souls! God looks on them with an engaged eye, as his own by many dear titles, and is well-pleased in his own

* Aristot.

goodness to them, and ravished with the reflex of his own excellencies shining in them. "As the bridegroom rejoices over the bride," (it is the language of divine love) "so their God rejoices over them." And what a blessed rest do they find in the complete fruition of their beloved? All their desires quietly expire in his bosom. What triumphs of joy following? Can we frame a fuller conception of happiness, than to be perfectly loved by infinite goodness, and perfectly to love him?

(3.) The supreme joy of the saints is for the felicity and glory of God himself. For as the holy soul feels no more powerful motive to love God, than because he is most worthy of it, as he is God, a being of infinite excellencies, and therefore to be loved above the dearest persons and things, even itself; so the highest joy it partakes of is from this consideration, that God is infinitely blessed and glorious. For in this the supreme desire of love is accomplished, that the most beloved object is perfectly honoured and pleased. In heaven the love of the saints to God is in its highest perfection; and they see his glory in the most perfect manner, which causes a transcendent joy to them. And this is one reason why the saints, though shining with unequal degrees of glory, are equally content. For their most ardent love being set on God, that he is pleased to glorify himself by such various communications of his goodness, is full satisfaction to their desires. Besides, in those different degrees of glory, every one is so content with his own, * that there is no possible desire of being but what he is.

4. The full joy of heaven shall continue without diminution, or end.

First. The number of possessors cannot lessen it. The divine presence is an unwasted spring of pleasure equally full and open to all, and abundantly sufficient to satisfy the immensity of their desires. Envy reigns in this world, because earthly things are so imperfect in their nature, and so peculiar in their possession, that they cannot suffice, nor be enjoyed by all. But in heaven none is touched with that low base passion: for God contains all that is precious and desirable in the highest degrees of perfection, and all partake of the influence of his universal goodness

* Sic itaque habebit donum aliud alio minus, ut hic quoque donum habeat ne velit amplius. *Aug.*

without intercepting one another. In the kingdom above there is no cause for the elder brother to repine at the Father's bounty to the younger, nor for the younger to supplant the elder, to obtain the birthright. The heirs of God are all raised to sovereign glory. Every one enjoys him as entirely and fully, as if solely his felicity. God is a good as indivisible as infinite, and not diminished by the most liberal communications of himself. We may illustrate this by comparing the price of our redemption, and the reward. The death of Christ is an universal benefit to all the saints, yet it is so applied to every believer for his perfect redemption, as if our Saviour in all his agonies and sufferings had no other in his eye and heart; as if all his prayers, his tears, his blood were offered up to his Father only for that person. The common respect of it the apostle declares in those admirable words, that signify such an excess of God's love to us, "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" But to imagine that * the propriety of every believer is thereby prejudiced, is not only false, but extremely injurious to the merit and dignity, and to the infinite love of Christ. Therefore the same apostle tells us, "The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God; who loved me, and gave himself for me:" as if he were the sole object of Christ's love, the end and reward of his sufferings. And this appropriating of it to himself, is no prejudice to the rights of all others. St. John describes himself by that truly glorious title, "The disciple whom Jesus loved." Could he speak this of himself without the injury and indignation of the other disciples? Certainly he might. For if we consider that incomprehensive love of Christ, expressed to them all at his last supper, after Judas was gone forth; "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you." We may easily understand, that every one of them might justly believe that he was singularly beloved of Christ. They were all received in the heart, though (with John) they did not all lean on the breast of their Divine Master. Thus in heaven God is

* Et totum se dedit universis & totum singulis. Ac per hoc quicquid passione sua salvator præstitit, sicut totum ei debent universi, sic singuli; nisi quod prope hoc plus singuli quam universi, quod totum acceperunt singuli quantum universi. *Salvian.*

the universal treasure of all the saints, and the peculiar portion of every one. * As by his essence he equally fills the whole world, and every part of it; and by his providence equally regards all and every particular creature; so in heaven he dispenses the riches of his love to all, that they cannot desire more, if every one of them were (if I may so express it) the only begotten of "the only begotten himself," the sole heir of all the merits of his Son. Every saint may with the inflamed spouse break forth in that triumph of love; "My beloved is mine, and I am his." Nay, the great number of the glorified saints is so far from lessening their joy, that it unspeakably increases it. "The innumerable company of angels, and the general assembly of the church of the first-born," next to the happiness of enjoying God, are a chief part of heaven. An unfeigned ardent affection unites that pure society. Our love is now kindled either from a relation in nature, or some visible excellencies that render a person worthy of our choice and friendship: but in heaven the reasons are greater, and the degrees of love incomparably more fervent. All carnal alliances and respects cease in that supernatural state. The apostle tells us, "If I have known Christ after the flesh, I know him so no more." By the resurrection and ascension of Christ he was transported into another world, and had communion with him as an heavenly king, without low regards to the temporal privilege of conversing with him on earth. The spiritual relation is more near and permanent than the strictest band of nature. The saints have all relation to the same heavenly Father, and to Jesus Christ the Prince of peace, and head of that happy fraternity. The principal motive of love here, is for the inherent excellencies of a person. Wisdom, goodness, holiness, are mighty attractives, and produce a more worthy affection, a more intimate confederacy of souls, than propinquity in nature. David declares that "all his delight was in the excellent." But there are allays of this noble love here. For,

(1.) There are relics of frailty in the best men on earth, some blemishes that render them less amiable when discovered. Here their graces are mixed infirmities, and but ascending to glory.

* Si audiat multitudo silens, non inter se particulatim comminunt sonos, tanquam cidos; sed omne quod sonat & omnibus totum est, & singulis totum. *August. in Epist. ad Volusan.*

Accordingly our love to them must be regular and serene; not clouded with error, mistaking defects for amiable qualities. But in heaven the image of God is complete, by the union of all the glorious virtues requisite to its perfection. Every saint there exactly agrees with the first exemplar, is transformed according to the primitive beauty of holiness. No "spot or wrinkle remains," or any such thing, that may cast the least aspect of deformity upon them.

(2.) In the present state, the least part of the saint's worth is visible. As the earth is fruitful in plants and flowers, but its riches are in the mines of precious metals, the veins of marble hidden in its bosom. True grace appears in sensible actions, "but its glory is within." The sincerity of aims, the purity of affections, the impresses of the Spirit on the heart, the interior beauties of holiness, are only seen by God. Besides, such is the humility of eminent saints, that the more they abound in spiritual treasures, the less they show. As the heavenly bodies when in nearest conjunction with the sun, and fullest of light, make the least appearance to our sight. But all their excellencies shall then be in view. "The glory of God shall be revealed in them." And how attractive is the divine likeness to an holy eye? How will it ravish the saints to behold an immortal loveliness shining in one another? Their love is mutual and reflexive, proportionable to the cause of it. An equal constant flame is preserved by pure materials. Every one is perfectly amiable, and perfectly enamoured with all. Now can we frame a fuller conception of happiness, than such a state of love, wherein whatever is pleasant in friendship is in perfection, and whatever is distasteful by men's folly and weakness is abolished. The psalmist breaks out in a rapture, "Behold how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! Love is the beauty and strength of societies, the pleasure of life. How excellent is the joy of the blessed, when the prayer of Christ shall be accomplished, that they all may be "one! As thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us." God is absolutely one in his glorious nature and will, and therefore unalterably happy: and their inviolable union in love, is a ray of the essential unity between the sacred persons. There are no divisions of heart and tongues, as in this Babel, but the most perfect and sweetest concord, an eternal agreement

in tempers and inclinations. There are no envious comparisons; for love that affectively transforms one into another, causes the glory of every saint to redound to the joy of all. Every one takes his share in the felicity of all, and adds to it. Such is the power of that celestial fire wherein they all burn, that it melts and mixes souls in such an entire union, that by complacence and an intimate joy, the blessedness of all is, as it were, proper to every one; as if every one were placed in the hearts of all, and all in the heart of every one. If in the church of the firstborn christians, in the earthly Jerusalem, the band of charity was so strict, that it is said, the "Multitude of believers were of one heart, and one soul;" how much more intimate and inseparable is the union of the saints in "Jerusalem above," where every one loves another as himself?

It is recorded of Alexander, that entering with Hæphestion his favourite, into the pavilion of Darius' mother, then his prisoner, she bowed to the favourite, as having a greater appearance of majesty, thinking him to be Alexander; but advised of her error, she humbly begged his pardon, * to whom the generous king replied, "You did not err, mother, for this is also Alexander." Such was their affection, that whoever was taken of them, the other was taken in him; the less ascending in the greater, without degrading the greater in the less. This is a copy of the holy love of the blessed; but with the same difference, as between the description of a star with a coal, and its beauty in its proper aspect. And where all is love, all is delight. O how do they enjoy and triumph in the happiness of one another? With what an unimaginable tenderness do they embrace? What reciprocations of endearments are between them? O their ravishing conversation, and sweet intercourse! for their presence together in heaven is not a silent show. In the transfiguration, Moses and Elias talked with Christ. With what excellent discourses do they entertain one another? If David felt such inward pleasure from the sense of God's favours, that he could not restrain the expression of it, but invites the saints, "Come and hear, all ye that fear the Lord, and I will tell you what he has done for my soul." Certainly in heaven, the blessed with overflowing affections recount the divine benefits, the ad-

* Non errasti, mater, nam hic Alexander est. *Curt. l. 3.*

mirable method, whereby the life of grace was begun, preserved and carried on in the midst of temptations; the continual succession of mercies in the time of their hopes, and the consummation of all in the time of their enjoyment. How joyfully do they concur in their thanksgivings to God for the goodness of creation, in making them reasonable creatures, capable to know, love and enjoy him, when they might have been of the lowest order in the whole sphere of beings; for his compassionate care and providence over them in this world. But especially for his sovereign mercy in electing them to be vessels of honour; for his powerful grace, in rescuing them from the cruel and ignominious bondage of sin; for his most free love, that justified them from all their guilt by the death of his only Son, and glorified them with himself. They are never weary in this delightful exercise, but continually bless him for his mercy that endures for ever. We may judge by the saints here, when they are in a fit disposition to praise God, what fervours they feel in their united praises of him in heaven. The psalmist in an ecstacy calls to all the parts of the world to join with him; "The Lord reigns, let the heavens rejoice, and the earth be glad; let the sea roar, let the fields be joyful, and all that dwell therein." He desires that nature should be elevated above itself, that the dead parts be inspired with life, the insensible feel motions of joy, and those that want a voice, break forth in praises, to adorn the divine triumph. With what life and alacrity will the saints in their blessed communion celebrate the object of their love and praises? The seraphims about the throne "cried to one another," to express their zeal and joy, in celebrating his eternal purity and power, and the glory of his goodness. Oh the unspeakable pleasure of this concert! when every soul is harmonious, and contributes his part to the full music of heaven! O could we hear but some echo of those songs wherewith the heaven of heavens resounds, some remains of those voices wherewith the saints above "triumph in the praises," in the solemn adoration of the King of spirits, how would it inflame our desires to be joined with them? "Blessed are those that are in thy house, they always praise thee."

Secondly. The fulness of joy in heaven is undecaying; for the causes of it are always equal. And those are the beatific objects revealed, and the uninterrupted contemplation of it.

Whilst we are here below, the Sun of Righteousness, as to our perception and sense, has ascensions and declinations, accesses and recesses. And our earth is not so purified, but some vapours arise that intercept his cheerful refreshing light. From hence there are alternate successions of spiritual comforts and sorrows, of doubts and filial confidence in the saints. It is a rare favour of heaven, when an humble believer in his whole course is so circumspect as not to provoke God to appear displeased against him: when a christian (as those tutelar angels spoken of in the gospel) always beholds the face of his heavenly Father, and converses with him with a holy liberty. And what a torment the "hiding of God's face" is to a deserted soul, only they know who feel it. External troubles are many times attended with more consolations to the spirit, than afflictions to sense; but to love God with a transcendent affection, and to fear he is our enemy, no punishment exceeds, or is equal to it. As his loving kindness in their esteem is better than life, so his displeasure is worse than death. How do they wrestle with God by prayers and tears, and offer as it were, a holy violence to the King of heaven, to recover their first serenity of mind, the lost peace of heart? How passionately do they cry out, with Job, in the book of his patience, (Job 29. 2, 3, 4.) "O that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me: when his candle shined upon my head, and when by his light I walked through darkness: as I was in the days of my youth, when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle." And sometimes God delays the revealing himself even to his dearest children; not that he does not see their necessities, and hear their prayers, or is so hard that till their extremities he is not moved with compassion, but for wise and holy reasons; either "that they may not return to folly," if by any presumptuous sin they forfeited their peace; or if they have been careful to please him, yet he may deprive them of spiritual comforts for a time, to keep them humble, and that with an obedient resignation to his sovereign pleasure they may wait for his reviving presence. And then joy returns greater than before. For thus God usually renders with interest what he suspended only for trial. But the saints above are for ever enlightened with the vital splendour and dear regards of his countenance, always enjoy his beamy

smiles. A continual effusion of glory illustrates heaven and all its blessed inhabitants.

And their contemplation of God is fixed. If the object, though extraordinary glorious, were transient, or the eye so weak that it could only see it but by glances, the height of joy would not be perpetual. But the mind is prepared with supernatural vigour, to see the brightness of God's face, and by the most attentive application always converses with that blessed object, so that the joy of heaven is never intermitted for a moment. They always see, and love, and rejoice, and praise him.

It is possible a carnal suspicion may arise in some, as if the uniform perpetual vision of the same glory might lose its perfect delightfulness. For those who seek for happiness in the vanity of the creatures, are always desirous of change, and have their judgments so corrupted, that while they languish with a secret desire after an unchangeable good, yet they conceive no good as desirable, that is not changed.

But to correct this gross error of fancy, let us a little inquire into the causes of dissatisfaction, that make the constant fruition of the same thing here to be tedious.

I. Sensible things are of such a limited goodness, that not any of them can supply all our present wants, so that it is necessary to leave one for another. And the most of them are remedies of our diseased appetites, and if not temperately used, are destructive evils. Eating and drinking are to extinguish hunger and thirst, but continued beyond just measure become nauseous. Besides, the insufficiency of their objects, the senses themselves cannot be satisfied all at once. The ear cannot attend to delightful sounds, and the eye be intent on beautiful colours at the same time: the satisfaction of one sense defeats another of enjoying its proper good; therefore the same object is not constantly pleasant, but the heart is distempered from as many causes, as there are desires unaccomplished. Add further, all things under the sun afford only a superficial delight, and miserably deceive the expectations raised of them: and many times there is a mixture of some evil in them, that is more offensive than the good is delightful. The honey is attended with a sting, so that often those things we sigh after through vehement desire, when they are obtained, we sigh for grief. Now all

these causes of dissatisfaction cease in heaven; for * God is an infinite good, and whatever is truly desirable and precious is in him in all degrees of perfection. And in his presence all the powers of the soul are drawn out in their most pleasant exercise, and always enjoy their entire happiness. The fruition of him exceeds our most raised hopes, as much as he is more glorious in himself than in any borrowed representations. God will be to us incomparably "above what we can ask or think." The compass of our thoughts, the depth of our desires are imperfect measures of his perfections. And as he is a pure good in himself, so he is prevalent over all evil. It is evident therefore, that nothing can allay the joys of saints when they are in God's presence.

2. Novelty is not requisite to ingratiate every good, and make it perfectly delightful. † God is infinitely happy, to whom no good was ever new. It is indeed the sauce that gives a delicious taste to inferior things. For men relish only what is eminent, and the good things of this world are so truly mean, that they are fain to borrow a show of greatness by comparison with a worse estate preceding. But an infinite good produces always the same pure equal complete joy, because it arises from its intrinsic perfection, that wants no foil to commend it. The psalmist breaks forth, "Whom have I in heaven but thee?" This is no vanishing rapture, but a constant joyful height of affection. God the essential happiness of the saints, is always perfectly lovely and delightful to them.

3. The glorified saints in every period of their happy state, have as lively a perception of it as in the beginning. To make this evident, we must consider that the pleasure of novelty springs from a quick sense of the opposite terms, between our condition in the want of some desired good, and after our obtaining it. Now the mind is more intense on the advantage,

* Vitæ nos tædium tenet, timor mortis natat omne consilium, nec implere nos ulla fœlicitas potest. Causa autem est, quod non perveniamus ad illud bonum immensum & insuperabile, ubi necesse est consistat nobis voluntas nostra, quia ultra summum non est locus *Sen. ep. 74.*

† Εἰ ἡ φύσις ἁπλῆ εἴη ἡ αὐτὴ πρᾶξις ἡδίστη ἔσται· διὸ ὁ Θεὸς ἀεὶ μίαν καὶ ἁπλῆν χαίρει ἡδονήν *Arist. Eth. lib. 7. c. ult.*

and more strongly affected at first. One newly freed from the torments of a sharp disease, feels a greater pleasure than from a constant tenour of health. Those who are raised from a low state to eminent dignity, are transported with their first change; but in tract of time the remembrance of their mean condition is so weakened and spent, that it is like the shadow of a dream, and proportionably their joy is lessened. Honours, like perfumes, by custom are less sensible to those that carry them. But the saints above always consider and feel the excellent difference between their suffering and triumphant state. They never lose that ravishing part of felicity, the vivid sense of past evils. Their reflections are always as strong on the misery from whence they were raised to the pitch of happiness, as in their first glorious translation. In what an ecstacy of wonder and pleasure will they be, from the fresh memory of what they were, and the joyful sense of what they are? I was (says the admiring soul) poor, blind, and naked; but O miraculous and happy alteration! I am full of light, enriched with the treasures of heaven, adorned with divine glory, I was under the tyrannous power of satan, but he is bruised under my feet. I was sentenced to an everlasting separation from the presence of God, my only life and joy; but now am possessed of my Supreme Good. O how transporting is the comparison of these wide and contrary extremes? How beautiful and pleasant is the day of eternity, after such a dark tempestuous night? How does the remembrance of such evils produce a more lively feeling fruition of such happiness? How strangely and mightily does salvation with eternal glory affect the soul? This gives a sprightly accent to their everlasting hallelujahs. This preserves an affectionate heat in their thanksgivings to their victorious Deliverer. And thus their happiness is always the same, and always new. Their pleasure is continued in its perfection.

Lastly. The blessedness of the saints is without end. This makes heaven to be itself. There is no satiety of the present, no solicitude for the future. Were there a possibility, or the least suspicion of losing that happy state, it would cast an aspersion of bitterness upon all their delights: they could not enjoy one moment's repose; but the more excellent their happiness is, the more stinging would their fear be of parting with it. "But the inheritance reserved in heaven, is immortal, undefiled, and

fades not away." And the tenure of their possession is infinitely firm by the divine power, the true support of their everlasting duration. "With God is the fountain of life." They enjoy a better immortality, than the tree of life could have preserved in Adam. The revolutions of the heavens, and ages, are under their feet, and cannot in the least alter or determine their happiness. After the passing of millions of years, still an entire eternity remains of their enjoying God. O most desirable state! where blessedness and eternity are inseparably united. O joyful harmony! when the full chorus of heaven shall sing, "this God is our God for ever and ever." This adds an infinite weight to their glory. This redoubles their unspeakable joys with infinite sweetness and security. They repose themselves in the complete fruition of their happiness. God reigns in the saints, and they live in him for ever.

From what has been discoursed we should,

1. Consider the woful folly of men in refusing such an happiness, that by the admirable favour of God is offered to their choice. Can there be an expectation, or desire, or capacity in man of enjoying a happiness beyond what is infinite and eternal? O blind and wretched world! so careless of everlasting felicity. Who can behold, without compassion and indignation, men vainly seeking for happiness where it is not to be found, and after innumerable disappointments fly to an impossibility, and neglect their sovereign and final blessedness? Astonishing madness! that God and heaven should be despised in comparison of painted trifles. This adds the greatest contumely to their impiety. What powerful charm obstructs their true judging of things? What spirit of error possesses them? Alas, eternal things are unseen! not of conspicuous moment, and therefore in the carnal balance are esteemed light, against temporal things present to the sense. "It does not appear what we shall be:" the veil of the visible heavens covers the sanctuary, where JESUS our highpriest is entered, and stops the inquiring eye.

But have we not assurance by the most infallible principles of faith, that the Son of God came down from heaven to live with us, and die for us, and that he rose again to confirm our belief in his "exceeding great and precious promises" concerning this happiness in the future state? And do not the most evident principles of reason and universal experience prove, that this

world cannot afford true happiness to us? How wretchedly do we forfeit the prerogative of the reasonable nature, by neglecting our last and blessed end? If the mind be darkened, that it does not see the amiable excellencies of God, and the will so depraved that it does not feel their ravishing power; man ceases to be a man, and becomes like the beasts that perish. As a blind eye is no longer an eye, being absolutely useless to that end for which it was made. And though in this present state men are stupid and unconcerned, yet hereafter their misery will awaken them, to discover what is that supreme good wherein their perfection and felicity consists. When their folly shall be exposed before God, angels, and saints, in what extreme confusion will they appear before that glorious and immense theatre? Our Saviour told the unbelieving Jews, "There shall be weeping, and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves turned out." They shall be tortured with the desire of happiness without possible satisfaction. It is most just that those who err without excuse, should repent without remedy.

2. Let us be excited seriously to apply ourselves in the use of effectual means for the obtaining this happiness. Indeed the original cause of it, is the pure rich mercy of God; the meritorious, is the most precious obedience of our Saviour, by whom we obtain "plenteous redemption." His abasement is the cause of our exaltation. The wounds he received in his body the characters of ignominy, and footsteps of death, are the fountains of our glory. "Eternal life is the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord." But the gospel declares; "that without holiness no man shall see God." A holy change of our natures, perseverance in the course of universal obedience, are indispensably requisite in order to our obtaining heaven. "Those who by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, honour, and immortality, shall partake of eternal life." Now were there no other reason of this constitution, but the sovereign will of God, it were sufficient. But the foundation of it is laid in the nature of the things themselves. Therefore our Saviour does not simply declare, that an unregenerate person "shall not see the kingdom of God," but with the greatest emphasis "cannot," to signify an absolute impossibility of it. Besides the legal bar

that excludes unsanctified persons from the beatific vision of God, there is a moral incapacity. Suppose that justice should allow omnipotence to translate such a sinner to heaven, would the place make him happy? Can two incongruous natures delight in one another? The happiness of sense is by an impression of pleasure from a suitable object: the happiness of intellectual beings arises from an entire conformity of dispositions. So that unless God recede from his holiness, which is absolutely impossible, or man be purified, and changed into his likeness, there can be no sweet communion between them. Our Saviour assigns this reason of the necessity of regeneration in order to our admission into heaven: "That which is born of the flesh, is flesh; and that which is born of the spirit, is spirit." According to the quality of the principle, such is what proceeds from it. The flesh is a corrupt principle, and accordingly the natural man is wholly carnal in his propensions, operations, and end. The disease is turned into his constitution. He is dead to the spiritual life, to the actions and enjoyments that are proper to it: nay, there is in him a surviving principle of enmity to that life: not only a mortal coldness to God, but a stiff aversion from him, a perpetual resistance and impatience of the divine presence, that would disturb his voluptuous enjoyments. The exercises of heaven would be as the torments of hell to him, while in the midst of those pure joys his inward inclinations vehemently run into the lowest lees of sensuality. And therefore till this contrariety, so deep and predominant in an unholy person, be removed, it is utterly impossible he should enjoy God with satisfaction. Holiness alone prepares men for the possession of celestial happiness, that is against the corruption, and above the perfection of mere nature.

"Let us then, having such a joy set before us, lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and run with patience the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith." Methinks the sight of worldly men, so active and vigilant to prosecute their low designs, should quicken us to seek with the greater diligence and alacrity the "kingdom of heaven, and the righteousness thereof." A carnal wretch urged by the sting of a brutish desire, with what impatience does he pursue "the pleasure of sin, which is but for a season?" An ambitious person, with what an intempe-

rate height of passion does he chase a feather? A covetous man, how greedily does he prosecute the advantages of the "present world that passes away," and the lusts thereof? Ah! how do they upbraid our indifferent desires, or dull delays, and cold endeavours, when "such a high prize" is set before us? Who is able to conceive the excess of pleasure the soul feels when it first enters through the beautiful gate of paradise, and sees before it that incomprehensible glory, and hears a voice from him that sits upon the throne, "enter into thy master's joy," for ever to be happy with him? The serious belief of this will draw forth all our active powers in the service of God. The feeding by lively thoughts on this supernatural food, will add new vigour and lustre to our graces, and make our victory easy over the world. If we believe indeed that our bodies shall be spiritual, and our souls divine in their perfections, it will make us resolute to subdue the rebel flesh, and rescue the captived spirit from all entanglements of iniquity. "Having the promise of such an excellent reward, let us always abound in the work of the Lord."

3. The lively hope of this blessedness is powerful to support us under the greatest troubles that can befal us in this our mortal condition. Here we are tossed upon the alternate waves of time, but hereafter we shall arrive at the port, the blessed bosom of our Saviour, and enjoy a peaceful calm: "and so we shall ever be with the Lord." Words of infinite sweetness! This is the song of our prosperity, and charm of our adversity: "we shall ever be with the Lord." Well might the apostle add immediately after, "therefore comfort one another with these words."

More particularly. They are a lenitive to moderate our sorrows upon the departure of our dearest friends, who die in the Lord: for they ascend from this valley of tears, to the happy land of the living. What father is so deserted of reason, as to bear impatiently the parting with his son, that goes over a narrow part of the sea, to a rich and pleasant country, and receives the investiture and peaceable possession of a kingdom? Nay, by how much the stronger his love is, so much the more transporting is his joy: especially if he expects shortly to be with him, to see him on the throne, in the state of a king, and to partake of his happiness. If then it be impossible to nature to

be grieved at the felicity of one that is loved; according to what principle of nature or faith do believers so uncomfortably lament the death of friends, of whom they have assurance that after their leaving our earth, they enter into an everlasting kingdom, to receive a crown of glory from Christ himself? Our Saviour tells the disciples, "If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said I go to my Father," to sit down at his right hand in majesty. A pure affection directly terminates in the happiness and exaltation of the person that is loved. I am not speaking against the exercise of tender affections on the loss of our dear friends; and the pensive feeling of God's hand in it; which is a natural and necessary duty. There is a great difference between stupidity and patience: but violent passion, or unremitting sorrow, is most unbecoming the blessed hope assured to us in the gospel.

Chrysostom treating of this argument, and reflecting upon the custom of those times, wherein at funeral solemnities a train of mourning women attended the corpse, tearing their hair and face, and crying out with all the expressions of desperate sorrow, breaks forth, "Ah christian faith and religion! that was triumphant over thine enemies in so many battles and victories by the blood and death of the martyrs, how art thou contradicted by the practice of these who profess thee in words? Is this not to be sorrowful as those that have no hope? Are these the affections, the expressions of one that believes the blessedness of immortal life? What will the heathens say? How will they be induced to believe the promises of Christ to his servants of a glorious kingdom, when those who are so in title, behave themselves as if they had no steadfast faith in them."

4. The hope of this blessed state, is able to free us from the fear of death. This last enemy gives a hot alarm to mankind, both as it deprives them of all that is pleasant here, and for the terrible consequences that attend it. To the eye of sense, a dead body is a spectacle of fearful appearance. He that a little before heard, and discoursed, and with a cheerful air conversed and enjoyed the world, now is dead, and all his senses in him: the eyes are dead to light, and the ears to sounds, the tongue to words, the heart to feel any affections, and the countenance to discover them: nothing remains but silence, horror, and corruption. Besides, "after death comes judgment," and a state of

unrelenting torments to the wicked. But a true believer that has been obedient to his Saviour, sees things by another light than that of sense, and has living hopes in his dying agonies. He knows that death to the saints is but a sleep: and while the body rests in the grave, the soul is as it were all act, continually exercising its most noble faculties on the best objects. Does the soul sleep in that all-enlightened world, that sees with open face the infinite beauty of God? that hears and bears a part in the hymns of the angels and saints encircling his throne? that drinks of the rivers of pleasure that flow from his presence? that freely and joyfully converses with all the celestial courtiers, the princes of that kingdom, the favourites of God? Then it truly lives. This reconciles death to a christian, who has nothing more in his wishes than to be with Christ, and knows that diseases and pains, the forerunners of it, are but as breaking down the walls of this earthly dark prison, that the soul may take its flight to the happy region, and for ever enjoy the liberty of the sons of God. And for his body, that shall be re-united to the soul in glory. Methinks God speaks to a dying believer, as he did to Jacob, when he was to descend to Egypt; "Fear not to go down into the grave, I will go down with thee, and I will bring thee up again." The same Almighty voice that gave being to the world, shall "awake those who sleep in the dust," and reform them according to the example of Christ's glorified body. O how should we long for that triumphant day! and with most ardent aspirings pray, "Thy kingdom come in its full power and glory?"

I Shall now come to speak of the mournful subject, the cause of my appearing here at this time, the deceased, reverend and excellent divine, Dr. Thomas Manton: a name worthy of precious and eternal memory. And I shall consider him, both in the quality of his office, as he was an 'Ambassador of Christ,' declaring his mind, and representing his authority, and in the holiness of his person, showing forth the graces and virtues of his Divine Master.

God had furnished him with a rare union of those parts

that are requisite to form an excellent minister of his word. A clear judgment, rich fancy, strong memory, and happy elocution met in him, and were excellently improved by his diligent study.

The preaching of the word is the principal part of the minister's duty, most essential to his calling, and most necessary to the church. For this end chiefly, the several orders in the ministerial office were instituted, (Ephes. 4.) and upon our Saviour's triumphant ascent and reception into heaven, an abundant effusion of the spirit in graces and abilities descended upon men. Now in the performing this work, he was of that conspicuous eminence, that none could detract from him, but from ignorance or envy.

He was endowed with extraordinary knowledge in the scriptures, those holy oracles from whence all spiritual light is derived: and in his preaching, gave such a perspicuous account of the order and dependance of divine truths; and with that felicity applied the scriptures to confirm them, that every subject by his management was cultivated and improved. His discourses were so clear and convincing, that none without offering voluntary violence to conscience, could resist their evidence. And from hence they were effectual not only to inspire a sudden flame, and raise a short commotion in the affections, but to make a lasting change in the life. For in the human soul such is the composition of its faculties, that till the understanding be rectified in its apprehensions and estimations, the will is neve induced to make an entire firm choice of what is necessary for the obtaining perfect happiness. A sincere persevering conversion is effected by weighty reasons, that sink and settle in the heart.

His doctrine was uncorrupt and pure, 'the truth according to goodness.' He was far from a guilty vile intention, to prostitute that sacred ordinance for the acquiring any private secular advantage. Neither did he entertain his hearers with impertinent subtilties, empty notions, intricate disputes, dry and barren without productive virtue: but as one that always had before his eyes the great end of the ministry, the glory of God, and the salvation of men, his sermons were directed to open their eyes, that they might see their wretched condition as sinners, to

hasten their "flight from the wrath to come," to make them humbly, thankfully and entirely "receive Christ, as their Prince, and all-sufficient Saviour." And to build up the converted "in their most holy faith," and more excellent love, that is "the fulfilling of the law." In short, to make true christians eminent in knowledge and universal obedience.

As the matter of his sermons was designed for the good of souls; so his way of expression was proper to that end. Words are the vehicle of the heavenly light. As the divine wisdom was incarnate to reveal the eternal counsels of God to the world; so spiritual wisdom in the mind, must be clothed with words, to make it sensible to others. And in this he had a singular talent. His style was not exquisitely studied, not consisting of harmonious periods, but far distant from vulgar meanness. His expression was natural and free, clear and eloquent, quick and powerful, without any spice of folly, and always suitable to the simplicity and majesty of divine truths. His sermons afforded substantial food with delight, so that a fastidious mind could not disrelish them. He abhorred a vain ostentation of wit, in handling sacred things; so venerable and grave, and of eternal consequence. Indeed, what is more unbecoming a minister of Christ, than to waste the spirits of his brain, as a spider does his bowels, to spin a web only to catch flies? to get vain applause by foolish pleasing the ignorant. And what cruelty is it to the souls of men? It is recorded as an instance of Nero's savage temper, * that in a general famine, when many perished by hunger, he ordered a ship should come from Egypt (the granary of Italy) laden with sand for the use of wrestlers. In such extremity to provide only for delight, that there might be spectacles on the theatre, when the city of Rome was a spectacle of such misery, as to melt the heart of any but a Nero, was most barbarous cruelty. But it is cruelty of an heavier imputation, for a minister to prepare his sermons to please the foolish curiosity of fancy with flashy conceits; nay, such light vanities, that would scarce be endured in a scene, while hungry souls languish for want of solid nourishment.

His fervour and earnestness in preaching was such, as might

* Suet.

soften and make pliant the most stubborn, obdurate spirits. * I am not speaking of one whose talent was only in voice, that labours in the pulpit as if the end of preaching were for the exercise of the body, and not for the profit of souls: but this man of God was inflamed with an holy zeal, and from thence such ardent expressions broke forth, as were capable to procure attention and consent in his hearers. He spake as one that had a living faith within him of divine truths. From this union of zeal with his knowledge, he was excellently qualified to convince and convert souls. The sound of words only strikes the ear, but the mind reasons with the mind, and the heart speaks to the heart.

His unparalleled assiduity in preaching, declared him very sensible of those dear and strong obligations that lie upon ministers, to be very diligent in that blessed work. What a powerful motive our Saviour urged upon St. Peter? "As thou lovest me, feed my sheep, feed my lambs." John 21. And can any feed too much, when none can love enough? Can any pains be sufficient for the salvation of souls, for which the Son of God did not esteem his blood too costly a price? Is not incessant unwearied industry requisite to advance the work of grace in them to perfection? In this the work of a minister has its peculiar disadvantage, that whereas an artificer, how curious and difficult soever his work be, yet has this encouragement, that what is begun with art and care, he finds in the same state wherein it was left. A painter that designs an exact piece, draws many lines, often touches it with his pencil to give it life and beauty, and though unfinished, it is not spoiled by his intermission. A sculptor that carves a statue, though his labour be hard from the resistance of the matter, yet his work remains firm and durable. But the heart of man is of a strange temper, hard as marble, not easily receptive of heavenly impressions; yet fluid as water, those impressions are easily defaced in it; it is exposed to so many temptations that induce an oblivion of eternal things, that without frequent excitations to quicken and confirm its holy purposes, it grows careless, and all the labour is lost that was spent on it. This faithful minister 'abounded in

* Si sudare aliter non potes, est aliud.

the work of the Lord;' and which is truly admirable, though so frequent in preaching, yet was always superior to others, and equal to himself. In this last time when declining to death, yet he would not leave his beloved work; the vigour of his mind supporting the weakness of his body. I remember when oppressed with an obstinate hoarseness, a friend desiring him to spare himself; he rejected the advice with indignation.

He was no fomenter of faction, but studious of the public tranquillity. He knew what a blessing peace is, and wisely foresaw the pernicious consequences that attend divisions. By peace, the bond of mutual harmony, the weakest things are preserved and prosper; but where discord reigns, the strongest are near to ruin. The heavenly consent in the primitive church, was a principal cause of its miraculous increase and flourishing; but after dissentions prevailed amongst christians, that was destroyed in a short time, which was built by the divine union and heroic patience of the primitive christians. And the glorious beginnings that promised the reformation of all Europe, were more obstructed by the dissensions of some employed in that blessed work, than by all the power and subtilty, the arms and artifices of Rome itself. How afflictive is the consideration of our divided church? Sweet peace! whither art thou fled? Blessed Saviour! who didst by thy precious blood reconcile heaven and earth, send down thy Spirit to inspire us with that wisdom that is pure and peaceable, that those who agree in the same principles of faith, in the same substantial parts of worship, in asserting the same indispensable necessity of holiness, may receive one another in love. I am affectionately engaged in a matter that so nearly touches all those that value the protestant interest.

Briefly; Consider him as a christian, his life was answerable to his doctrine.

It is applicable to some ministers, what is observed of the carbuncle; by its colour, lustre, and fiery sparklings it seems to be actually a fire, but it has only the name and appearance of it. Thus some in the pulpit seem to be all on fire with zeal, yet their hearts are as cold as a stone, without holy affections, and their lives are unworthy their divine ministration. But this servant of God was like a fruitful tree, that produces in its branches what it contains in the root; his inward grace

was made visible in a conversation becoming the gospel of Christ,

His resolute contempt of the world secured him from being wrought on by those motives, that tempt low spirits from their duty. He would not rashly throw himself into troubles, nor *spretâ conscientiâ* avoid them. His generous constancy of mind in resisting the current of popular humour, declared his loyalty to his Divine Master. His charity was eminent in procuring supplies from others, when in mean circumstances himself. But he had great experience of God's fatherly provision, to which his filial confidence was correspondent.

His conversation in his family was holy and exemplary, every day instructing them from the scriptures in their duty.

I shall finish my character of him, with observing his humility. He was deeply affected with the sense of his frailties and unworthiness. He considered the infinite purity of God, the perfection of his law the rule of our duty, and by that humbling light discovered his manifold defects. He expressed his thoughts to me a little before his death; 'If the holy prophets were under strong impressions of fear, upon the extraordinary discovery of the Divine presence, how shall we poor creatures appear before that holy and dread Majesty?' Isaiah, after his glorious vision of God, reflecting upon himself, as not retired from the commerce and corruption of the world, breaks forth, "Wo is me, for I am undone! because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts." It is infinitely terrible to appear "before God the Judge of all," without the protection of "the blood of sprinkling, that speaks better things than the blood of Abel." This alone relieved him, and supported his hopes. Though his labours were abundant, yet he knew that the work of God, passing through our hands, is so blemished, that without an appeal to pardoning mercy and grace, we cannot stand in judgment. This was the subject of his last public sermon.

He languished many months, but presuming he should be too strong for his infirmity, neglected it, till at last it became insuperable and mortal. Many pathetical aggravations heighten our great and dear loss; that such a faithful minister of Christ should be taken away, whose preaching was so powerful to re-

pair the woful ruins of godliness and virtue in a degenerate age: whose prudent pacific spirit rendered him so useful in these divided times, when professors of the same religion are alienated from one another, as if they had been baptized with the waters of strife: that before our tears were dried up for the loss of other worthy ministers, the fountain of sorrow should be opened again by this afflicting stroke. But it becomes us to receive the dispensations of heaven with humble and quiet submission; to reflect upon our sins with an holy grief, that provoke God to remove such an excellent instrument of his glory from us. "Let us pray to the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth faithful labourers into it." O that surviving ministers might be animated with a zeal more pure and fervent in their divine work! And that people would be wise, while a price is put into their hands, to improve it for their eternal advantage. The neglected gospel will at last be a terrible witness against the disobedient, to justify and aggravate their condemnation.

conducing for his glory and our good. For not only the superabundant mercy, but the righteousness and truth of God appear with an eminency of glory in this way of making us happy. The promise of the reward was from excellent goodness, but the performing it to his faithful servants is from his justice and fidelity. He was unlimitedly free, but having pleased with such condescending favour to make a covenant with us, upon our sincere compliance with the terms of it, he is obliged for the honour of his truth and righteousness to accomplish it: though in strictness he can owe nothing to us, yet he is a debtor to his promise. From hence the apostle saith, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course; from henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which God the righteous Judge shall give unto me." The honour of his truth is sacred and inviolable: thus he is proclaimed in a style expressing how glorious his truth is, and how dear to him, "The Lord thy God, he is God;" and the only attribute that is annexed is, "the faithful God, keeping covenant and mercy." At the last day he will be glorified not only as the free and magnificent donor of all the treasures of heaven, but as the God of truth, who has fulfilled all the exceeding great and precious promises made to his servants.

And the connexion between our duty and the reward, has a powerful influence to excite our sincere and earnest endeavours to please God: it is the strongest engagement to universal sanctity and obedience. For the gospel is an everlasting covenant, and the condition of it is unalterable: heaven is not promised as an absolute irrespective gift, but as a reward consequent of services. There can be no lively regular hope of future happiness, but according to the revelation of God's will, who gives it: the accomplishment of his promise has a dependance upon our duty. The crown of life is promised to "those that love God; and love is the fulfilling of the law:" if any one aspires to that dignity, he must from love, which is the internal character and disposition of a saint, obey and serve God. To presume of obtaining our last and blessed end, without a diligent use of the means prescribed in the gospel, is such idle preposterous folly, that men would be ashamed of with respect to the gaining of temporal things. Can he that sows no seed, expect a harvest?

or that plants no vineyard, expect a vintage? Can a merchant hope for rich returns from a foreign country, without trading thither? And it is as vain to hope for the eternal reward, without following holiness. The presumption is heightened and more fatal, when any shall think, if they are predestinated to glory, they shall obtain it without their best diligence in making "their calling and election sure." This is to make a diametrical opposition between the decrees of God, and the record of his will in the gospel. Election is a chain that reaches from heaven to earth, to draw men from earth to heaven: it has intermediate links that must not be left out. Between election and glorification the faith and obedience of the gospel intervenes: the apostle informs us, "that we are chosen to salvation, through the sanctification of the Spirit and the belief of the truth." The decrees of God are a secret we cannot dive into. We can discover what is secret only by what is revealed; our election by our effectual calling, which is the infallible and sensible effect of it. To lie down securely in the secret decree, neglecting to "work out our own salvation," is such pernicious sophistry, as can only be inspired from the father of lies. If ever such a thought is suggested, that if I am elected, I shall be happy though careless of my duty, chain it up, there is folly and frenzy in it. Heaven is bestowed as a gift of his infinite grace and power, but according to the wise and immutable order set down in the gospel; which is so far from lessening and obscuring the glory of his mercy, that it makes it more conspicuous: for holiness, to which we are so strictly obliged as preparatory for heaven, is our most divine perfection, and qualifies us for the enjoyment of God.

2. The *excellence* of the reward is to be considered: "He that serves me, him will my Father honour." Such is the wisdom and equity of God in his moral government, that he has by a graceful order annexed honour as the reward to virtue. The general rule is, "Those that honour me, I will honour; and those that despise me, shall be lightly esteemed." There is such a majestic beauty in holiness as commands the esteem and affections of men, unless they are prodigiously degenerate and corrupted by their lusts. The heathens were convinced that honour is the intrinsic tribute always due to virtue; and some were so strict, and had such divine thoughts as to maintain that

virtue is the only true nobility. It is foretold in scripture, "The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance:" they leave an honourable evidence of their graces and virtues in their works, and are of precious memory, "when the name of the wicked shall rot." But the reward our Saviour promises, is "the honour that comes from God only:" and as his majesty infinitely transcends all earthly principalities; so in proportion, the honour that he confers upon his servants is above all the titles of honour, all the swelling praises of men. This reward is given in the next world. Here the servants of Christ are sometimes darkened with many afflictions, and buried in sad obscurity before they are dead; they are the objects of scorn and contempt: St. Paul who was an incarnate seraphim, whose zeal in the service of his Divine Master exceeded all the apostles, yet was, as he declares, vilified as the offscouring of the world. Now such is the excellent goodness of God, that he will certainly in the next life reward with the highest honour all who have advanced his honour.

The honour and glory of the future state is concealed at present, it is wrapped up in a cloud; only some glimmerings of it glance upon our eyes: "Light is sowed for the righteous," the plenary revelation is hereafter. It is true the apostle tells us, "that life and immortality are brought to light through the gospel:" but that is only to be understood of a comparative revelation, to what was under the law: it is brought to the light of faith, which is like to break of day, when the shadows of the earth and the light of heaven are mixed. There is a veil between us and the glory of heaven, partly to try our faith, whether we will believe the promise of God without sensible discoveries of it; and to try the sincerity of our love, whether we love God for himself, without the distinct unfolding of that excellent glory: and to comply with the weakness whilst we are in such tempered tabernacles of flesh. If the beams of his glory were displayed before our eyes, we should be struck with blindness, as Saul was at the brightness of Christ's appearing to him: the flood of light would swallow us up in ecstacy and amazement. Our faint faculties cannot sustain his glorious presence. As God told Moses, "No man can see my face and live;" St. John tells believers, "Now we are the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: now our names are written in the

book of life," in the rolls of eternity; now we are adopted into the line of heaven; now we are clothed with the righteousness of Christ, the royal purple robe died in his blood; we have the privileges of the justified state; we have a right to the eternal kingdom by our Saviour's purchase, and the firm covenant of grace; we have the "Holy Spirit of promise," who is "the earnest of our inheritance, and the seal of God's love to us:" but the full partaking of that glory is reserved till we leave this visible world.

I will briefly glance at the several degrees of the reward that shall be conferred upon all whom "the King of glory delights to honour in the next world."

(1.) The scripture reveals, that "the *souls* of just men first come to the perfection of glory." If Adam had continued in his holy state after a short immortality upon earth, he had been translated alive, and entire in soul and body, to heaven: the everlasting doors had been opened wide for his reception: but since our disobedience, though our guilt be pardoned, the gate is so strait that the gross spoils of our flesh must be left behind us. Now immediately upon the dissolution of the saints, God sends a guard of angels, his most noble creatures, to convoy their souls into "the courts of his honour," into the chamber of his glorious presence. Divine dignity! This is the privilege of his chosen friends and favourites, of the most illustrious and blessed creatures. In heaven the divine majesty is seen in its glory: and if one ray of it, reflecting upon suffering Stephen, adorned him with angelical glory, how much more will the face of God most radiant and resplendent transform the soul into an admirable similitude of his perfections? "When we shall see him as he is, we shall be like him," by his everliving Spirit, the principle of the divine life and beauty in the soul, as the soul is of the natural life and beauty in the body. There will remain no shadow of error in the mind, no mixture of evil in the will, no pollution in the affections, but the full likeness of God in holiness and joy. This is the highest honour an immortal spirit is capable of. The state of innocence wherein man was created is called a "state of honour:" the angels are dignified with the title of saints: and God is "glorious in holiness:" it follows therefore, when "the spirits of just men are made perfect" they

partake of the heavenly and divine honour. If the joy that springs from believing whilst we are in this vale of tears be "unspeakable and full of glory," how glorious is the joy that springs from the clearest sight and the most intimate fruition of the blessed God, the joy that is without defect or end? as the psalmist expresses, "In thy presence is fulness of joy, at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore."

(2.) At the last day their *bodies* shall be raised and refined to a spiritual excellency, and transformed into the likeness of Christ's glorious body. The apostle declares, that the consummation of the saint's glory shall be at Christ's appearance. Then their souls shall be reinvested with shining robes of immortality: they shall be placed at the right hand of the everlasting King, which implies the highest honour; as God's being at our right hand, implies protection and defence: they shall then receive a most glorious testimony of his acceptance, "Well done, good and faithful servants, enter into your Master's joy:" after they are approved, they shall sit upon thrones, and judge the world, even the prince of darkness with all his apostate trains; they shall give their solemn suffrages to the judgment pronounced by our Saviour, saying, "Hallelujah, salvation, and glory, and honour, and power unto the Lord our God; for true and righteous are his judgments." Add after the last act of his regal office, our Saviour will lead them into the kingdom of his glory to reign with him for ever and ever. Who is able to unfold this excellent glory? all human words are unworthy and too narrow to express it; only the lively and ravishing experience of that glory can fully reveal it to us. The meanest saint in that kingdom shines in glory that infinitely exceeds all the most solemn and magnificent representations of an earthly majesty, all the trophies and triumphs of the most famous conquerors. To raise our thoughts by a distinct comparison of them, consider,

The glory of saints is substantial and solid, it is inherent in them. The apostle says, "It is a glory that shall be revealed in us:" a plenary infusion of all glorious endowments both in soul and body shall conform us to the Son of God. The glory of this world is but an airy opinion, a verbal sound without substance, empty titles, external appearance, and confers no real

dignity to the person that receives it. There is no greatness in worldly honour: it is fancy heightens some by comparison with those that are below them. But heaven is the kingdom of true glory, and every saint there is truly glorious. The psalmist declares God's judgment of all the honour and prosperity of the world: "As a dream when one awakes, so O Lord, when thou awakest thou wilt destroy their image." They are painted shadows, splendid toys. What difference there is between the clear and sound judgment of a person throughly awake, and the vain fugitive fancies of one that dreams, there is, and much more between the swelling images of worldly honour, and the real heavenly honour of the saints.

The heavenly glory brings entire satisfaction. "As for me," saith David, "I will behold thy face in righteousness, I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness." When the morning of glory arises, and the soul awakes from the heavy eyelids of flesh, and sees the King of spirits in his beauty, and the impression of the divine excellencies conspicuous in itself, what a joyful satisfaction, as sweet as life, is diffused through all its powers? What a heavenly sabbath composes all its vast and restless desires? The glorified saint sings with the psalmist, "Return to thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord has dealt bountifully with thee." But how unsatisfactory is all secular greatness and honour? Of this we have the fullest testimony from some who ascended to the top of worldly glory: Solomon whose calm and flourishing state was scarce ever paralleled, yet declares that all was vanity. And the Roman triumphs, wherein the world was represented in its highest glory, was but an empty show: * Vespasian the emperor in his triumphant way often reflected upon his folly in being induced to suffer such a tedious vanity. It is true the dreaming minds of men are deceived with vain complacence in it for a while, and this makes them unwilling to be convinced of their foolish prizing it; yet they cannot find any solid true satisfaction: they are charmed with a superficial pleasure, that cannot reach to the centre of the soul.

* Nam ut mens per diem veris visionibus avocatur ne dormiat, ita falsis nocte ne excitetur. *Lactant. de Opific. Dei. c.* 18.

To sum up all, The honour of the servants of Christ is eternal: they will shine like the stars, that never faint in their watches and influences, with a durable glory. But the glory of this world, like a blaze in straw, presently vanishes: not one ray of secular glory shall enlighten the highest monarchs, in the shady valley of death, nor in the regions of darkness beyond it.

IV. The application.

The proper and main use of what has been spoken, is,

1. To direct our ambitious desires and endeavours to seek heavenly honour. Nature has instilled the desire of praise and glory: and this is like some plants that in their native soil have a poisonous quality, but transplanted into another soil and climate, are not only innocent, but healthful. Pride ruined both worlds: the angels were expelled from heaven, and Adam from paradise for their pride. And ever since it is a seminal sin productive of innumerable evils and mischiefs: "pride of life is one of the great corrupters in the world:" it is the cause of envy and emulation: of envy that would degrade those that are above; of emulation that urges those who are below by any guilty means to ascend higher: it is one of the great destroyers of men here and hereafter. The affection of the praise of men makes so many ashamed "of the gospel of Christ," of owning its truths, or subjecting themselves to its pure rules. This account is given of the infidelity of some in our Saviour's time, "they sought the honour of men, and not the honour that comes from God only." But let the desire of glory be consecrated, let our aspirings be transported to a new and heavenly object, to the incorruptible crown, and it is a saintly ambition becoming the breast of a christian. The changing of the object will be an excellent means to rectify our inordinate desire of honour, of what is pompous and specious in this world. There is some resemblance in curing the diseases of the mind, and those of the body. A disease is not only cured by what is manifestly contrary, but sometimes by what seems like to it, yet has a secret contrariety. The feverish heat is not only spent by cooling julaps, but by cordials that fortify the natural heat that consumes those humours that are the inflammable matter which foments the fever. Thus the sensual desire of worldly honour is extinguished

by a pure ethereal affection, the desire of that honour that comes from the God of glory, who is the absolute and eternal fountain of honour.

2. Let us be effectually excited to choose Christ for our master, and devote ourselves to his service for ever. Though his dominion is supreme, and his right in us inalienable, yet he will be glorified by our free obedience. Our resolution and consent to serve him, that it may be acceptable, must be *deliberate, entire,* and *permanent.*

(1.) *Deliberate;* from the conviction and sense of our duty and interest: for the ignorance and deception of the mind, the sudden surprisal of the will is contrary to that clear consent that is requisite to establish a covenant.

There is a competition between the Son of God, and the god of this world, who shall reign over us: one we must serve: it is therefore our highest wisdom to choose a gracious master, and most just to serve him who by full right may claim due service. If with free judgment we ponder things, if our carnal senses and passions have not the decisive vote, we shall readily yield ourselves to Christ, who by so many dear titles has a right in us: "for to this end Christ died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living." He "is the true vine" that left "his sweetness, the good olive that left his fatness to reign over us;" and shall we choose the bramble to domineer? He requires our service not for his profit, but that his love and bounty may take a rise to reward us: but satan will torment them most who are most obsequious to him: and what charm, what impression upon the human mind can induce us to prefer a murderer before our Saviour?

(2.) Our consent must be *entire,* without exception against any of his laws, or his providential will, and any reservation of our own lusts and appetites. He has told us, "No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other." The commands of Christ and satan are absolutely inconsistent: obedience to the one is direct rebellion against the other. We may not capitulate with him, and think by some good works to compound for our exorbitances, and that strictness in some duties will excuse our indulgence of some sins: he will not accept of

bankrupt obedience, but strictly requires the payment of sincere obedience to all his commands.

The apostle expresses our universal duty in active and passive obedience to Christ; "None of us liveth to himself, no man dieth to himself; for whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord, whether therefore we live or die, we are the Lord's:" that is, our lives must be employed in his service, and our deaths be at his order and disposal. Is the external acknowledging of him, and a specious homage worthy his most precious sufferings? Can his death excuse our disobedience? Can his sufferings that purchased his dominion to rule us, procure a licence for us to rebel against his commands? Such a thought is blasphemy.

And our consent must be entire; that is, we must serve him with all the freedom and force of our internal faculties, with all the diligence of our outward members, with all possible industry to advance his glory. It is not the empty title of Lord, nor the performing some slight observances that will please Christ. The commands of the gospel frequently urge us to be fervent in our heavenly calling, "First seek the kingdom of heaven, and the righteousness thereof: strive to enter in at the strait gate: take the kingdom of heaven by violence: work out your own salvation with fear and trembling: abound in the work of the Lord: be rich in good works: add to faith virtue, to virtue knowledge," and every grace in degrees of eminence: "give all diligence to make your calling and election sure:" "we must walk circumspectly and exactly becoming the dignity and purity of our high and holy calling." We have many duties to perform, many sins to subdue and mortify, many graces to perfect, and the most intent application of mind, the most zealous industry is requisite for such great ends. By diligence and culture our souls will be as fruitful gardens abounding "in the fruits of righteousness:" but if we are remiss and careless, they will be barren as the sands of Africa. We should with as much zeal and vigour serve Christ as ever we served our lusts, those imperious exacters of our time, and strength, and affections. It is the proportion St. Paul enforces, "As you have yielded your members servants and weapons to uncleanness, so yield your members weapons and servants of righteousness."

But how many that have made a trade of sin, are as careless in religion as if it were a slight recreation? How many please themselves with a mediocrity in religion, and pretend if they be but saved, they are content: they do not aspire to excellent degrees of glory, nor to higher degrees in the favour of God, and are lukewarm and remiss in his service, presuming what they do will be sufficient to secure their souls: but was ever any person so deserted of reason, that in worldly trade when he might gain a hundred pounds he is contented with ten? Besides this disposition and language is of one that principally desires heaven, to escape hell: and all that he does religiously is the effect of servile fear, which is no saving grace: for were it not for the terrible punishment, such a person would securely commit the sin. Briefly, as the Lord Christ "has saved us to the uttermost," we should serve him to the uttermost: we should with such alacrity and diligence, with such willing hearts and earnestness serve him on earth as he is served in heaven: if we had the powers of the angels, yet our service would be short of our obligations.

(3.) *Permanent.* Our service of Christ must be upon firm principles and permanent reasons to our lives' end. Sometimes there are desires and resolutions kindled in the breast, and the carnal passions blow so violently as to quench them. * Like some cursed women, that by violent potions destroy the living conception in their bowels. Others in the sunshine of prosperity will adhere in profession to Christ, but when storms arise, they withdraw themselves. Others "begin in the Spirit," run well for a time, but "end in the flesh." Our Saviour has spoke the doom of all such, "No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God:" he is not worthy the honour of being Christ's servant, and he will quickly find the fearful consequences of Christ's rejection in the next world. We read of Shimei, that upon Solomon's confining him to Jerusalem, with the threatening of death if he went forth: "And Shimei said to the king, the saying is good: as my lord the king hath said, thy servant will do." 1 Kings 2. 31. What an easy confinement was it to remain in the holy city, where all

* Quæ in ipsis visceribus, medicamentis epotis originem futuri hominis extinguunt & paricidium faciant ante quam pariant. *Minuc. Fel.*

the tribes came twice a year, and when they returned left their hearts behind them: it seems to be a privilege and favour rather than a punishment. Yet a petty interest drew him out, and for the violation of his promise he lost his life. This is a representation of those who for temporal respects desert the service of Christ, violate their promises to him, and leave the new Jerusalem, the city of the living God. Our Saviour will accept of none into his service but upon his own terms; "Whoever will be my disciple, let him take up his cross and follow me." Who would not be ambitious to be the copy of such a divine original? We should rejoice if called forth to sharp trials for his name, as having an occasion to give the clearest testimony of our superlative love and entire fidelity to our blessed Lord.

To conclude the argument, Let us be persuaded to dedicate ourselves wholly to the service of Christ, and to live according to our dedication. This should be the early act of the reasonable creature; for is it equal to put him off with the relics of the world to whom the firstfruits, the best of all we are and have is due? But if we have been careless of our duty, let us not any longer defer to make a voluntary consecration of our lives to his glory: remember that life is but a "span's breadth," our opportunity of serving Christ is short, and the omission of it is irreparable. What is there to recommend a service to us, but is to be found in the service of Christ? It is the most honourable service, whether we consider the divine majesty of our Master, who is "King of kings, and Lord of lords:" the quality of our fellow-servants, the angels of light, and the glorified saints, who are the princes of his court, and the heavenly nobility: and the nature of the work that is sublime and excellent, becoming an intellectual soul, that is spiritual by nature, and divine by grace.

It is the most sweet and easy service: this will seem incredible to those who judge of the delights of the spirit by the principles of the flesh. In this sense also, the "carnal man understands not the things of the spirit:" who can discover the pleasure of music to one that was born deaf? or describe the light of the sun to one that was ever blind? who can see a taste? The truth is, the life of carnal men has the appearance of joy, but not the reality: and the life of the saints has a gloomy melancholy appearance, but has an inward cordial joy

incomparably above all the vain flashy delights of the world. * A carnal man "that serves divers lusts and pleasures," is sometimes racked and vexed betwixt contrary passions. Every lust has a secret sting with its honey. And as the corrupt heart is its own tempter, so the guilty conscience is its own tormentor. Besides the fearful apprehension of what shall follow in the next world, when the revenging justice of God, and the cruel malice of satan shall concur to make the sinner miserable, is sufficient to poison the sweetest pleasures of sin. But the life of a saint is regulated by a law that is always at union in its precepts. He has divine assistance to enable him to perform it. His gracious Master will pardon his infirmities. The content of conscience, the joy of the Holy Ghost, that rewards our duty here, far exceeds all the severity and difficulty that the carnal nature complains of in obeying the divine law. "The yoke of Christ is" truly "easy, and his burthen" truly "light."

His service is the most profitable: he will protect, maintain, and everlastingly reward his servants. Is there any master so rich, so liberal, so faithful as Christ? How often do the slaves of the world complain that they have spent themselves in vain? As Jacob reproached Laban, "Thou hast deceived me, and changed my wages ten times;" so may the worldlings say, whose hopes have been often charmed with the specious promises of the world, and deluded in the end. Dear bought experience at last convinces them of their woful folly, in seeking for happiness where it was not to be found, and neglecting to seek it where it was. But the servants of Christ have at the present "their fruit unto holiness, and in the end everlasting life." The service of Christ here, is freedom, victory, empire, and hereafter a triumphant felicity.

I shall now address myself to the present occasion, which is to pay our last solemn respects to the memory of the Reverend Dr. Thomas Jacomb: who was so universally known, esteemed, and beloved in this city, that his name is a noble and lasting elogy. I shall not give an account of the time he spent in Cambridge, where he was fellow of Trinity College, and worthily esteemed in that flourishing society: but confine my discourse to his ministry in London. Here the divine providence disposed

* Justisti Domino sic et est, ut pœna sit sibi omnis inordinatus animus. *Aug.*

him into the family of a right honourable person, to whom he was deservedly very acceptable, and whose real and most noble favours conferred upon him, were only to be equalled by his grateful and high respects, and his constant care to promote serious religion in her family.

He was a servant of Christ in the most peculiar and sacred relation: and he was true to his title, both in his doctrine and in his life. He was an excellent preacher of the gospel, and had a happy art of conveying saving truths into the minds and hearts of men.

He did not entertain his hearers with curiosities, but with spiritual food: he dispensed the bread of life, whose vital sweetness and nourishing virtue is both productive and preservative of the life of souls. He preached "Christ crucified, our only wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption." His great design was to convince sinners of their absolute want of Christ, that with flaming affections they might come to him, and "from his fulness receive divine grace." This is to water the tree at the root, whereby it becomes flourishing and fruitful; whereas the laying down of moral rules for the exercise of virtue, and subduing vicious affections, without directing men to derive spiritual strength, by prayer, and in the use of divine ordinances, from the Mediator the fountain of all grace, and without representing his love as the most powerful motive and obligation to obedience, is but pure philosophy, and the highest effect of it is but unregenerate morality. In short, his sermons were clear, and solid, and affectionate. He dipped his words in his soul, in warm affections, and breathed a holy fire into the breasts of his hearers: of this many serious and judicious persons can give testimony who so long attended upon his ministry with delight and profit.

His constant diligence in the service of Christ, was becoming his zeal for the glory of his master, and his love to the souls of men. He preached thrice a week whilst he had opportunity and strength. He esteemed his labour in his sacred office both his highest honour and his pleasure.

At the first appearance of an ulcer in his mouth, which he was told to be cancerous, he was observed to be not much concerned about it, than as it was likely to hinder his preaching that was his delightful work: and when he enjoyed ease, and

after wasting sickness, was restored to some degrees of strength, he joyfully returned to his duty. Nay, when his pains were tolerable, preaching was his best anodyne when others failed; and after his preaching, the reflection upon the divine goodness that enabled him for the discharge of the service, was a great relief of his pains.

His life was suitable to his holy profession. His sermons were printed in a fair and lively character in his conversation. He was an "example to believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

He was of a staid mind, and temperate passions, and moderate in counsels. In the managing of affairs of concernment, he was not vehement and confident, not imposing and overbearing, but was receptive of advice and yielding to reason.

His compassionate charity and beneficence were very conspicuous amongst his other graces. His heart was given to God, and his relieving beneficent hand to the living images of God, whose pressing wants he resented with tender affections, and was very instrumental for their supplies.

And as his life so his death adorned the gospel, which was so exemplary to others, and so gracious and comfortable to himself. The words of men leaving the world make usually the deepest impressions, being spoken most feelingly, and with least affectation. Death reveals the secrets of men's hearts: and the testimony that dying saints give, how gracious a master they have served, how sweet his service has been to their souls, has a mighty influence upon those about them. Now the deportment and expressions of this servant of Christ in his long languishing condition, were so holy and heavenly, that though his life has been very useful, yet he more glorified God dying than living.

When he was summoned by painful sickness, his first work was to yield himself with resigned submission to the will of God. When a dear friend of his first visited him; he said, 'I am in the use of means, but I think my appointed time is come, that I must die: if my life might be serviceable to convert or build up one soul, I should be content to live, but if God hath no work for me to do, here I am, let him do with me as he pleaseth: but to be with Christ is best of all.' Another time he told the same person, 'that now it was visible it was a determined case.

God would not hear the prayer, to bless the means of his recovery,' therefore desired his friend to be willing to resign him to God, saying, 'It will not be long before we meet in heaven, never to part more, and there we shall be perfectly happy, there neither your doubts and fears, nor my pains and sorrows shall follow us, nor our sins, which is best of all.' After a long continuance in his languishing condition without any sensible alteration, being asked how he did, he replied, 'I lie here, but get no ground for heaven or earth:' upon which one said, 'Yes in your preparations for heaven,' 'O yes' said he, 'there I sensibly get ground I bless God.'

An humble submission to the divine pleasure was the habitual frame of his soul: like a die that thrown high or low, always falls upon its square: thus whether hope of his recovery were raised or sunk, he was content in every dispensation of providence.

His patience under sharp and continuing pains was admirable. The most difficult part of a christian's duty, the sublimest degree of holiness upon earth, is to bear tormenting pains with a meek and quiet spirit. Then "faith is made perfect in works:" and this was eminently verified in his long trial. His pains were very severe, proceeding from a cancerous humour, that spread itself in his joints, and preyed upon the tenderest membranes, the most sensible parts, yet his patience was invincible. How many restless nights did he pass through without the least murmuring or reluctancy of spirit.

He patiently suffered very grievous things "through Christ that strengthened him;" and in his most afflicted condition was thankful.

But what disease or death could disturb the blessed composure of his soul, which "was kept by the peace of God that passes all understanding." Such was the divine mercy, he had no anxieties about his future state, but a comfortable assurance of the favour of God, and his title to the eternal inheritance.

He had a substantial double joy, in the reflection upon his life spent in the faithful service of Christ, and the prospect of a blessed eternity ready to receive him. This made him long to be above. He said with some regret, 'death flies from me, I make no haste to my Father's house.' But the wise and gracious God, "having tried his faithful servant, gave him the crown of

life, which he hath promised to those that love him." His body, that poor relic of frailty, is committed in trust to the grave, "his soul sees the face of God in righteousness, and is satisfied with his likeness.

The hope of this should allay the sorrows of his dearest friends. When the persons we love and have lived with, are to be absent a few months, it is grievous, but at the last lamenting separation, all the springs of our tender affections are opened, and sorrows are ready to overwhelm us. But the steadfast belief of the divine world, and that our friends are safely arrived thither, is able to support our fainting spirits, and refresh all our sorrows. The truth is, we have reason to lay to heart the displeasure of God, and our own loss, when his faithful ministers are taken away. When the holy lights of heaven are eclipsed, it portends sad things: when the saints are removed from earth to heaven, their souls freed from the interposition of their dark bodies, they truly live, but we that remain, die, being deprived of their holy lives, their examples, that are a preservative from the contagion of the world. A due sense of God's afflicting providence is becoming us: but always allayed with hope of our being shortly reunited with our dearest friends for ever in the better world. O that our serious preparations, our lively hopes, and the presence of the great Comforter in our souls, may encourage us most willingly to leave this lower world, so full of temptations and trouble, to ascend into the world above, where perfect peace, full joy, and the most excellent glory are in conjunction for ever.

A

SERMON

PREACHED AT THE FUNERAL

OF THE

REVEREND & EXCELLENT DIVINE

MR. RICHARD BAXTER.

WHO DIED DECEMBER 8. 1691.

TO THE

RIGHT WORSHIPFUL

AND HIS MUCH HONOURED FRIEND,

Sir HENRY ASHURST, BARONET.

Sir,

YOUR noble and constant kindness to Mr. Baxter living, and your honourable respect to him dead, have induced me to inscribe the following memorial of him to your name. He was most worthy of your highest esteem and love, for the first impressions of heaven upon your soul, were in reading his invaluable book, The Saints' Everlasting Rest. This kindled a mutual affection in your breasts: his love was directing, counselling, and exciting you to secure your future happiness: your love was observant, grateful, and beneficent to him. The sincerity and generosity of your friendship, was very evident, in your appearing and stand-

ing by him, when he was so roughly and unrighteously handled, by one, who was the dishonour of this age's law; whose deportment in a high place of judicature, was so contrary to wisdom, humanity, and justice, that there need no foul words to make his name odious. * Of this and your other favours Mr. Baxter retained a dear and lasting sense; and in his dying hours declared, that you had been the best friend he ever had. He has "finished his course, and received his crown:" his name will shine longer than his enemies shall bark.

I cannot omit the mentioning, that Mr. Boyle and Mr. Baxter, those incomparable persons in their several studies, and dear friends, died within a short space of one another. Mr. Boyle was engaged in the contemplation of the design and architecture of the visible world, and made rare discoveries in the system of nature: not for curiosity and barren speculation, but to admire and adore the perfections of the Deity in the variety, order, beauty, and marvellous artifice of the creatures that compose this great universe. Mr. Baxter was conversant in the invisible world: his mind was constantly applied to understand the harmonious agreement of the divine attributes

* Judge Jefferies: see Memoirs prefixed to these volumes—page 13. Ed.

in the economy of our salvation, and to restore men to the favour and image of God. They are now admitted into the enlightened and purified society above: where the immense volumes of the divine wisdom are laid open, and by one glance of an eye, they discover more perfectly the glorious and wonderful works of God in heaven and earth, than the most diligent inquirers can do here, in a thousand years' study, though they had the sagacity of Solomon. By the light of glory, "they see the face of God, and are satisfied with his likeness for ever."

It is a high honour to you, that Mr. Boyle and Mr. Baxter should by their last will nominate you amongst their executors. It was the saying of a wise Roman, *Malo divi Augusti judicium, quam beneficium.* I had rather have the esteem of the Emperor Augustus than his gifts: for he was an understanding prince, and his esteem was very honourable to a person. That two who so excelled in wisdom and goodness, should commit to your trust the disposal of their estates for the uses of piety and charity, is a more noble testimony of their esteem of your prudence and inviolable integrity, than if they had bequeathed to you rich legacies.

It is a satisfaction to me, that I have complied with Mr. Baxter's desire in preaching his Funeral Sermon, and with yours in publishing it. I shall unfeignedly recommend yourself, your excellent lady, and virtuous children, to the divine mercies: and remain, with great respect,

SIR,

Your humble and faithful Servant,

WILLIAM BATES.

A

SERMON, &c.

LUKE XXIII. 46.

And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my Spirit.

THE words are the prayer of our blessed Saviour in the extremity of his passion. His unrighteous and implacable enemies had nailed his body to the cross, but they had no power over his spirit, that was ready to take its flight to the sanctuary of life and immortality. This dying prayer of Christ is a pattern for sincere christians: he has invested them with the relation of children of God; and authorizes them by his example, to commend their departing spirits to his powerful love. The observation I shall unfold and apply, is this:

It is the privilege of dying saints, to commend their spirits into the hands of their heavenly Father.

In discoursing of this, I shall,

Consider the foundation of this privilege;—Show what a blessed privilege this is;—and then apply it.

I. The foundation of this privilege is to be considered. This is built upon two things:

1. The relation of God to the saints.

2. His perfections joined with that relation.

1. The relation of God to the saints. The title of Father is upon several accounts attributed to God.

(1.) He is a Father by creation: "O Lord, thou art our Father: we are the clay, thou art the potter, we are the work of thine hands." Isa. 64. 8. He formed man's body into a majestic figure, becoming his original state, being Lord of the lower world. But in a peculiar manner he is styled "the Father of spirits:" they have a near alliance, and resemblance of the Father of lights, in their intellectual powers, and their immortal nature. From hence it is, the angels are called "the sons of God:" Job 2. 1. they are the eldest offspring of his power. Adam has the title of the "Son of God." Luke 3. 38. And since the fall, men are called "God's offspring." There is an indelible character of dignity engraven in the reasonable nature by the hand of God. But since man turned rebel to his Creator and Father, this endearing obliging relation aggravates his rebellion, but gives him no interest in the paternal love of God, of which he has made a deadly forfeiture. It is threatened against ignorant perverse sinners, "He that made them, will not have mercy on them."

(2.) Upon the account of external calling and profession, there is an intercurrent relation of Father and sons between God and his people. Thus the posterity of Seth are called "the sons of God:" Gen. 6. 2. and the entire nation of the Jews are so styled; "When Israel was young, I called my Son out of Egypt." Hosea 11. 1. And all that have received baptism, the seal of the holy covenant, and profess christianity, in this general sense may be called the children of God. But it is not the outward dedication that entitles men to a saving interest in God, unless they live according to that dedication. There are baptized infidels, as well as unbaptized. How many every day fall as deep as hell, whose hopes were high, on the account of their external christianity.

(3.) God is our Father upon a more excellent account, by renovation and adoption. The natural man is what St. Paul saith of the voluptuous widow, "dead while he lives." There

is only a cessation of spiritual acts, but an utter incapacity to perform them: he cannot obey nor enjoy God. Now the renewing of man is called a regeneration. Our Saviour tells Nicodemus, "Verily I say unto you, unless a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven." John 3. 3. The reason of the expression is, because there is a new nature, spiritual, holy and heavenly, communicated, different from the carnal, polluted and earthly nature, derived from the first Adam. And as the relation of a Father results from the communicating a vital active principle to another, in that kind of life like his own: so God by making us partakers of "a divine nature, of his life and image," Jam. 1. 18. is styled our Father: "Of his own will begat he us, with the word of truth." And we are said, "to be born again, not of corruptible seed, but incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." 1 Pet. 1. 23. By the divine influence, the word of God implants in them such qualities and dispositions whereby they resemble God, "are holy, as he is holy, in all manner of conversation." They are called godly, as they are like him in their minds, affections and actions. And to such God has the heart and eye of a father, to regard and relieve them in all their exigencies. "Like as a father pities his children, so the Lord pities them that serve him." Psal. 103. 13.

We are also the children of God by adoption. This heavenly privilege is obtained for us by the meritorious sufferings of Christ, and is founded in our union with him. "God sent his Son, that he might redeem them that were under the law, that they might receive the adoption of sons." Gal. 4. 4, 5. For his sake we are not only pardoned, but preferred to this heavenly dignity. It is worthy of observation, that the degrees of our redemption mentioned in scripture, have annexed to them parallel degrees of our adoption. Thus when it is said, "We are redeemed from the curse of the law," it is added, "That we might receive the adoption of sons." When it is said, "We are freed from the servile spirit of the law," it follows, "We have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." Rom. 8. 15. And the apostle tells us, that the redemption of our bodies from "the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the sons of God, is our adoption," that is the manifestation of it before all the world.

Our adoption is founded in our union with Christ. A member of Christ, and a son of God are the same: it is therefore said, "As many as received him, to them gave he power," or privilege, "to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." John 1. 12. And "ye are all the sons of God, by faith in Jesus Christ." Gal. 3. 6. This is the vital band of our union with Christ, and invests us with his relation to God. When he was to leave the world, he sends this comfortable message to his disciples; "Go tell my brethren, I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God." John 20. 17. His relation has the precedence in order, dignity and causality. He is God's own Son, Rom. 8. 3. in a sense infinitely high and proper to himself: "To which of the angels said he at any time, thou art my son, to-day have I begotten thee?" Heb. 1. 5. The sublimest prophet breaks forth with wonder, "Who shall declare his generation?" Isa. 53. 8. It is above our capacity and conception. It becomes us to acquiesce in what the scripture reveals. He is the eternal word and wisdom of God, "the brightness of his Father's glory." Heb. 1. 3. This is the most fit comparison: for as light is productive of light without any diminution; so the eternal Father communicated his essence to the Son. In short, God is Christ's Father by nature, and God by dispensation; he is our God as the author of nature, and our Father by adoption.

Before I proceed, it is fit to observe the excellence of the evangelical adoption above the civil adoption among men.

(1.) Adoption is a legal act in imitation of nature, for the comfort of those who are without children. But God had a Son, the heir of his love and glory. His adopting love heightened by considering our meanness and vileness: we are but a little breathing dust, worthless rebels. The apostle cries out in a rapture of admiration and joy, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!" If we consider the natural distance between God and us, as he is the Creator, and we are the works of his hands, it is truly infinite; but the moral distance between the holy righteous God and the guilty polluted creature, is, if it were possible, more than infinite: love inconceivable! That releases us from bondage, and adopts us into the line of heaven. If we admire any thing of this world in comparison of it, it is a sign we have no share in this privilege.

(2.) Civil adoption conveys no praiseworthy qualities into the person that is adopted. A king may adopt one to be his son, and the heir of his kingdom, but cannot endow him with a royalty of spirit, with ruling wisdom, with justice and equity, clemency and bounty, with magnanimity and fortitude, that may qualify him to manage the sceptre. The adopted prince may be of a low sordid disposition, a slave to his vile lusts, and designing to enslave others. But all the adopted sons of God are divinely renewed; they are purified from defiling and debasing lusts, and are adorned with all the graces of the Spirit, that God "is not ashamed to be called their God and Father, nor Christ ashamed to call them brethren." Now from this special relation and interest of God in the saints, there is a sure foundation of their trust in his saving mercy. David addresses himself to God for his preservation from imminent danger, "I am thine, save me:" as if his miscarrying would be a loss to God, who had so dear a propriety in him.

2. I come now to the second thing that encourages the praying faith of the saints when they leave the world, to commend their souls to him, His perfections joined with his relation: His love inclines, His truth engages, and His power enables him to bring them safely to heaven.

(1.) His love. This is the brightest ray of the Deity, the first and clearest notion we have of God. St. John tells us, "God is love." His love cannot be fully expressed by the dearest relations and affections in nature. The relation of parents, as it is most deeply implanted in nature, so it implies the most cordial, strong and tender affection. But as God is infinitely greater and better than earthly parents; so he equally excels them, as in his abilities, so in his good will to his children. Our Saviour directs us, "Call no man father upon earth, for one is your father, which is in heaven:" the title and love of a father is peculiar to him. Our Saviour argues, "If you that are evil, know how to give good things to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father to those that ask him?" The inference is strong, not only from the divine authority of the speaker, but from the native perspicuity of the things: for the love of an earthly father is but an infusion into his breast from the heavenly Father, and but a faint resemblance of his love.

The love of a mother is more tender and endearing than of a father: even a fearful hen will fly upon death, to preserve its tender brood from the devourer: yet the love of God to his children far excels it. "Can a woman forget a sucking child?" What heart, what marble is in her breast so incompassionate and unrelenting, as to neglect her helpless infant? "She may, but," saith God, "I will never forget thee." The seraphims, those bright and unperishing flames, are but faint and cold, in comparison of God's love to his children.

It is observable how the love of God to them expresses itself in all the notions of propriety and preciousness, to make it more sensible to us. They are styled "his treasure, his jewels," Exod. 19. the most precious part of his treasure, the "jewels of his crown," Mal. 3. that are the richest jewels. Now "will he throw away" Zech. 9. 16. his treasure, or suffer the cruel enemy to rob him of his jewels? Will he not take them into his safe custody? It is to be observed, that the esteem and affection of God principally respects the souls of his children: their souls have an original affinity with him in their substance as spirits: and being "born again of the Spirit," they are spirit in their divine qualities and endowments, and more endeared to him than by their first alliance. His tender care to preserve them, will be correspondent to his valuation and love.

Moreover, the condition of departing souls affords another argument of reliance upon his love; for they leave this visible world, with all their supports and comforts; they are stripped of all sensible securities: and will he leave them fatherless in such a forlorn and desolate state? His love is expressed by mercy, compassion, pity, melting affections, that are most tenderly moved when the beloved object is in distress. Our Saviour propounds an argument for dependance upon the delivering love of God, from the exigence of his people; "Shall not God deliver his own elect," the designation of love, "who cry day and night to him? He will do it speedily." Love is never more ardent and active than in times of distress. Therefore when his dying children are deprived of all their hopes and dependance upon creatures, and fly to him for protection and relief, will he not hear their mournful requests, and grant their fainting desires? When their earthly tabernacles are so ruinous, that they

are forced to dislodge, will the love of a heavenly Father suffer their naked souls to wander in the vast regions of "the other world, seeking rest, and finding none?" Certainly he will bring them into his reviving presence. If divine love be so condescending, that "the high and lofty One that inhabits eternity, dwells with the humble and contrite spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble," Isa. 57. when they are confined to our lowly earth, we may be assured, when that spirit shall be divested of flesh, he will bring it to heaven, the temple of his glory, to be with him for ever. It is greater love for a king to lay aside his state, and dwell in a mean cottage with his favourite, than to receive him into his palace, and communicate to him of his rich abundance. It is another most comfortable consideration, that the love of God is invariable towards his children: his love is the sole moving cause of our filial relation to him: "Of his own will he begat us by the word of truth." His sovereign free love was the principle of his electing any to the dignity of being his children: this love is as unchangeable as free; and election that proceeds from it, is as unchangeable as his love. What can induce him to alter his affections towards them? For such is the perfection of his knowledge, that he can never be surprised by a sudden new event, that may cause a change in his mind and will. He foresaw all the sins of his people, with their provoking aggravations. Now if the foresight of them did not hinder his electing love in its rise, can they frustrate its end, the bringing of them to glory?

Besides, we may argue from what his love has done for his children, to what he will do: he has given his Son and Spirit to them, the surest signs of his love, if we consider the invaluable excellence of the gifts, and the design of the Giver.

The Son of God is the most excellent gift of his love, as undeserved, as he was undesired: and from hence the apostle argues, "He that gave his Son for us all, how much more will he with him give us all things?" Blessed God! What richer evidence, and more convincing demonstration can there be of thy love? "Will he not with him give us all things? The inference is direct and conclusive, with respect to temporal and eternal things. He will give to his children in the present world, whatever his wisdom, in conjunction with his love, sees good for them. To illustrate this by a low and familiar in-

stance; if a mother bestows upon her daughter rich jewels for her marriage ornaments, will she deny her pins to dress her? And we may as strongly argue, that with his Son he will give us eternal blessings. Will he give us the tree of life, and not permit us to eat of the fruit of it? What was the design of his counsel and compassion, in giving his Son to be a sacrifice for us, but to restore us to his favour? The apostle reasons strongly, "If when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." He has paid our ransom, and reversed the sentence of condemnation against us; and it invincibly follows, he can more easily accomplish our happiness in heaven. If love justify a sinner, it will glorify a saint.

And as the gift of the Son, so the most precious gift of the Spirit to God's children, to make them holy and heavenly, is the most certain sign of his love to them. The apostle in the fullest expression speaks of it; "God who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he has loved us, even when we were dead in sins, quickened us together with Christ: by grace we are saved." Sanctification is the effect of "rich mercy, great love, and saving grace." The children of God are sealed by the Holy Spirit to the day of redemption: that seal distinguishes them from the obstinate and polluted world, and ratifies the conveyance of eternal life to them. The Spirit is styled the "earnest of the inheritance." His dwelling in the saints by his sanctifying and comforting operations is an earnest of their dwelling with God in his sanctuary above. From hence the apostle propounds a strong argument to assure the saints, upon their leaving this world, of their reception into heaven; "Now he that hath wrought us for the self-same thing, is God;" and the Almighty always obtains his end: "who hath also given us the earnest of his Spirit." Holiness is the morning-star of the great day; grace is the preparative and assurance of glory: for although the saints are in themselves mutable, and while there remain corruption within, and a tempting world without, are liable to falling away, yet the free and powerful love of God that revived them when dead, will preserve them living; that which raised them from the grave, will prevent their relapsing into it. "The gifts of God are without repentance." How triumphantly does the apostle express his confidence, "Who shall separate us

from the love of God? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" These are the most powerful terrors that the perverse world, in combination with the devil, can make use of to constrain us to desert the service of God; but they are vain. "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us: for I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." This blessed assurance of the apostle, is not raised from his extraordinary privileges, nor from the apparition of angels to him, nor his rapture to paradise, nor special revelations, but from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord, that everlastingly embraces all his children. Briefly, in that God has given his Son to die for us, and his Spirit to live in us, his Son to purchase and prepare heaven for us, his Spirit to prepare us for heaven, a dying saint may with blessed tranquillity commend his soul into God's hands.

I have more particularly considered the fatherly love of God, what a strong security it affords to his children, that he will never leave them, in that no point requires and deserves more confirmation, and weight of argument to press it down into our distrustful hearts.

(2.) The divine truth affords a strong security to the children of God, to commend their souls to him at last. Truth is an attribute as essential and dear to God as any of his perfections. And in the accomplishment of our salvation, he ordered all things becoming of his wisdom, that is for the illustration of all his principal attributes, and accordingly designed the glory of his truth equally with the honour of his mercy. Thus he declares to his chosen people, "Know therefore that the Lord thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy, with them that love him, and keep his commandments." Deut. 7. 9. The attribute that is set next to the Deity, as most sacred, is the "faithful God;" and that further expressed, 'keeping covenant and mercy;" for he delights in fulfilling his promises, as in the freest acts of mercy. The psalmist breaks forth with the affectionate praises of these attributes, "I will

worship towards thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy loving-kindness and thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name." Psal. 138. 2. His word here immediately signifies his promise, that has its rise from his loving-kindness, and its performance from his truth. This he magnifies both with respect to the matter of his promises that are exceeding great and precious, and the fulfilling them above all that we can ask or think. God cannot "repent or lie;" his counsels are unretractable, from the immutability of his nature; his promises are infallible, from his fidelity: they are as unchangeable as the sun and stars in their appointed courses; Jer. 31. 35. nay, more stable than the centre: "for heaven and earth shall pass away," but not a tittle of promises, and our hopes be unfulfilled. If the frame of nature were dissolved, it would be no loss to God, who is glorious and blessed in his own perfections: but if promises fail, the honour of his truth would be impaired and blemished. The psalmist saith, "Those that know thy name, will trust in thee:" those who know the creature, its levity, mutability and mortality, will be discouraged from trusting in it; but those who know the eternal constancy of God in his nature and promises, will securely rely upon him.

Now the promises, the declaration of God's love, without which we cannot have any solid and sustaining hope in our death, assure us of God's receiving the separate spirits of his children. There was a constant clearness, though not in that degree of light as since the appearance of Christ, of the happiness of the departed saints. Dying Jacob breaks forth with a lively hope, "O Lord, I have waited for thy salvation." Gen. 49. 18. Job says, "Though he kill me, yet will I trust in him;" that is, for his almighty mercy in the next state. The psalmist expresses his confidence, "Thou wilt guide me by thy counsel, and receive me into thy glory." Psal. 73. 24. After the safe conducting him through a world of troubles and temptations, he would bring him to heaven, a place of equal purity and glory. David when he was in pressing peril, addresses to God, "Into thy hands I commend my spirit," Psal. 31. 5. to be preserved as a precious depositum; "thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth." His assurance is built on God's right and title to him, "Thou hast redeemed me," and his everlasting

fidelity. The apostle speaks with full assurance, "We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building of God eternal in the heavens." 2 Cor. 5. 1. And, "we are confident, I say, rather to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord." St. Peter encourages christians when surrounded with death, "to commit their souls to him: wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their souls to him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator." 1 Pet. 4. 1. He encourageth them to encounter death in its most formidable pomp, by considering their souls shall be safe for ever, upon the account of God's right and interest in them, and his fidelity: he has an original right in them by the first creation, as they are intellectual immortal spirits in their nature, but a nearer and more special right by a new and nobler creation, as they are renewed spirits, made like to him in his holiness, the most divine perfection. The relation of Creator implies his omnipotent love, and the attribute of faithful, his eternal love declared in his promises. There can never be the least cause to charge him with insincerity or inconstancy. "The favour of God is round about the righteous as a shield:" Psal. 5. "And his faithfulness is round about him," Psal. 89. that he is always ready to perform his promise to them. They may safely trust the worth of their souls, and the weight of eternity with him, who has said, "he will never leave them, nor forsake them."

Besides, the promise of a reward to the obedient children of God, is secured not only by his fidelity, but the declared equity of his proceedings in his final judgment. It is a regality invested in the crown of heaven to dispense rewards: "Whoever comes to God, must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." Heb. 11. 6. His being and rewarding bounty are the foundations of religion. It is true, such is the distance between God and the creature, and the eternal obligations of it to God, that it can challenge nothing from God, as due to its merit. Justice unqualified with bounty and clemency, owes nothing to the most excellent obedience of the creature; though innocent. But since the fall, our best works are defective and defiled, and want pardon; and our heaviest sufferings are but light in the balance, against the exceeding weight of glory. But the apostle tells the Thessalonians, "It is

a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them who trouble you: and to you who are troubled, rest with us." Consider them in the comparison; it is becoming his governing justice to punish the unrighteous persecutors, and reward his faithful servants who suffer for his glory. Now the present life, is the day for our work, as our Saviour saith, "I must do the work of him that sent me, while it is called to-day:" and at death, the "spirit returns to God that gave it," in order to judgment, either fatal or favourable, according to the tenour of men's good works, and the desert of their bad. The promise is "to them, who by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, they shall obtain eternal life." Rom. 2. 7. Our Saviour encourages his suffering servants, "Be faithful to death, and I will give you the crown of life." The complete reward is reserved to the great day of universal recompences, when the sons of God by a regeneration, shall be the sons of a glorious resurrection. Luke 20. 35. But the Righteous Judge will give a present reward at the end of the day, to all that with unfainting perseverance have performed his work. Our Saviour tells us, Mat. 20. 9. that all who wrought in the vineyard, received their rewards "in the last hour of the day:" the parallel is instructive, that when the night of death comes, the reward will be dispensed. There is a law recorded concerning the paying wages to those who were hired, that it should be in the end of the day; that it should not be detained "all night with thee until the morning." Deut. 24. 15. The allusion is very congruous, that God will fulfil his own law to his sons that serve him. The reward shall not abide with him the long dark interval, the night, wherein their bodies sleep in the grave, till the morning of the resurrection. Our Saviour promised the dying penitent, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." The end of our faith is immediately attended with the salvation of the soul: the labour of faith being finished, is productive of the beatific vision in the state of light and glory. The sum is, that the children of God who have by constant conversation sincerely endeavoured to please and glorify him, may with an entire resignation commit their souls to his hands, as if an angel were sent from heaven to them in their dying agonies, with the comfortable message, that they should presently be with God.

(3.) The divine power, in conjunction with love and truth, is the foundation of our secure dependance upon God in our last hours. This consideration is absolutely necessary for our sure trust: for love without power is ineffectual, and power without love of no comfortable advantage to us. The apostle gives this reason of his cheerful and courageous sufferings in the service of God, "For I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded he is able to keep what I have committed to him, till that day." 2 Tim. 1. 12. His faith respected the promises of God concerning his salvation, which are infinitely sure, the divine power being all-sufficient to fulfil them. The precious depositum that is committed to his dear care, he can and will preserve inviolate. The Father of sincere believers, is "the Lord of heaven and earth," who by his word, without the least strain of his power, made the world, and preserves it from falling into confusion. It is the essence of faith, to assure us of God's almighty mercy to all that have the true characters of his children, that are qualified for his salvation. Our Redeemer joins the two relations of "our Father and our God;" the gracious and the glorious relations are inseparable. Now the love of our heavenly Father engages the power of our God, that we shall want nothing to secure our happiness, that is within the object of omnipotence.

I shall insist no further upon the consideration of the divine power, because it will return under some of the following heads of discourse.

II. The blessedness of this privilege is to be unfolded. This will appear by considering,

1. What is the depositum, the thing that is intrusted in God's hands.

2. What is implied in his receiving of it.

1. The depositum. It is the soul, the more excellent and immortal part of man, that is commended to God's keeping.

(1.) It is our more excellent part in its nature and capacity. Man is a compounded creature, of a body and a soul: the body in its original and resolution is earth; the soul is of a divine descent, a spiritual substance, and in the nobility and perfections of its nature, but "a litle lower than the angels: it is the vile body, but the precious soul."

In its capacity it incomparably excels the body; for the body lives and moves in the low region of the senses, that are common with the worms of the earth; but the soul in its understanding and desires, is capable of communion with the blessed God, of grace and glory. From hence it is, that the whole world cannot make one man happy; for the ingredients of true and complete happiness are the perfection and satisfaction of the soul. The apostle tells us, "The less is blessed of the greater." Can the world bring perfection to man, that is so incomparably short of his imperfection? Our Saviour assures us, "the gain of the whole world cannot recompense the loss of one soul." There is a vast circuit in our desires, and all the lines terminate in the centre of blessedness. Can the world give sincere satisfaction to them? Solomon who was as rich and high as the world could make him, has left an everlasting testimony of the vanity of transient things, from his experimental observation, and the direction of the Holy Spirit: so he begins and ends his sermon, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity;" Eccles. 1. 1. & 12. 8. so vain and vexing, that we shall not only be weary of them, but of this life, wherein we use them. Eccles. 1. 17. Can the creatures make us happy, when their emptiness, and anguish annexed to it, make our lives miserable? The world cannot satisfy our narrow senses: "The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear with hearing," much less the infinite desires of our supreme faculties. Those who are now enchanted with its allurements, within a little while will see through its false colours. As when one awakes, all the pleasant scenes of fancy in his dream vanish; so when the soul is awakened in the end of life, "the world and the lusts thereof pass away," and the remembrance of them.

I shall add further; what clearer evidence can we have of the worth of the soul, than from God's esteem, the creator of it? Now when God foresaw the revolture of our first parent, that brought him under a double death in one sentence, temporal and eternal, and that all mankind was desperately lost in him, then his compassionate counsels were concerning his recovery: his love and wisdom accorded to contrive the means to accomplish our redemption, by the death of his incarnate Son: "we are not redeemed with silver and gold, but with the precious

blood of Christ, as a lamb without spot and blemish." 1 Pet. 1. Of what value is a soul in God's account, that he bought with his own Son's blood, the most sacred treasure of heaven? * We may say for the honour of our Redeemer and our own, that which the angels cannot, we were so valued by God himself, that his Son became man, and died on the cross for the salvation of our souls. I shall only mention another evidence and effect of God's valuation of our souls, "the eternal weight of glory," which exceeds all the thoughts of our minds, and desires of our hearts. What are all the kingdoms and pleasures of the world, in comparison of that blessedness God has prepared "for those who love him?" Now the soul that is inestimably precious, and should be most dear to us, is secured from danger, when received by God's hands.

(2.) The soul is our immortal part. The body is compounded of jarring principles, frail and mortal: a casualty or sickness dissolves the vital union, and it falls to the dust. But the soul is a spirit by nature, and immortal by its inherent property. Its spiritual operations performed without the ministry of the senses, (the eye of the mind contemplates its objects, when the eyes of the body are closed) demonstrate its spiritual nature: for the being is the root of its working, and consequently that it exists independently upon the body: but of this we have the clearest assurance in the scripture. This is another demonstration that present things cannot make us happy, for they forsake us the first step we take into the next world, and then the soul enters into happiness or misery equally eternal. The immortality of the soul, and the immutability of its state, are inseparable then; for the present life is the time of our work, the next is of recompences according to our works. "If we die in the Lord," the consequence is infallible, we shall live with him for ever: if we die in our sins, we shall not be received by his merciful hands, but fall into his bottomless displeasure. And of what concernment is it to have our souls with God in that infinite and incomprehensible duration? All the measures of time, days and weeks, months and years, and ages, are swallowed up in that invisible depth, as the rivers that pour into the sea, are swallowed up without any overflowing of its waters. The dove

* O anima! erige te, tanti vales. *Aug. in Psal.* 103.

that Noah let out of the ark, as a spy to discover whether the deluge was abated, found not a place to rest on; but after many circuits in the air, it returned to the ark. If our thoughts take wing, and multiply millions of millions of ages, we cannot rest in any computation, for there remains after all an entire innumerable eternity.

2. I will consider more particularly what is contained in this blessed privilege. The reception of the soul into God's hands, implies three things;—entire safety;—heavenly felicity;—it is a certain pledge of the reviving of the body, and its reunion with the soul in the state of glory.

(1.) Entire safety. After death the separate soul of a true believer immediately passes through the airy and ethereal regions to the highest heaven, the temple of God, the native seat and element of blessed spirits. The air is possessed by satan with his confederate army, who are rebels to God, and enemies to the souls of men: he is styled "the prince of the power of the air:" Ephes. 2. 2. he often raises storms and tempests, discharges thunder and lightning, the woful effects of which are felt in the lower world. The numbers, the strength, and the malice of the evil angels to the souls of men, render them very terrible; we may conjecture at their number, from what is related in the gospel, that "a legion possessed one man." Mark 5. 9. They are superior spirits to man, and though stripped of their moral excellencies, holiness, goodness and truth, yet retain their natural power at least in great degrees. Their malice is unquenchable. It is said of the devil, "He goes about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." All the joy those malignant spirits are capable of, is the involving the souls of men in their desperate calamity. And though they know their opposing God will increase their guilt and torment, yet their diligence is equal to their malice, to seduce, pervert, and ruin souls for ever. Now when the saints die, all the powers of darkness would, if possible, hinder the ascension of their souls to God. What David complains of his cruel enemies, is applicable in this case, "their souls are among lions;" and if destitute of divine preservation, the danger would be the same; as if a little flock of lambs were to encounter with a great number of fierce lions, or fiery dragons. Anger sets an edge upon power, and makes a combatant but of equal strength to over-

come. How dangerous then would the condition be of naked souls, opposed by over-matching enemies, armed with rage against them? How easily would they hurry them to the abyss, the den of dragons, the prison where lost souls are secured to the day of judgment?

But all the potentates of hell are infinitely inferior to God: they are restrained and tortured by the chains of his powerful justice: a legion of them could not enter into the swine without his permission, much less can they touch "the apple of his eye." That black prince with all his infernal host cannot intercept one naked soul from arriving at the kingdom of glory. Our Saviour assures us, "none is able to pluck them out of his Father's hands." John 10. 29. The Lord Christ our head and leader, having vanquished in his last battle on the cross, principalities and powers, made his triumphant ascension to glory: thus his members having overcome their spiritual enemies, shall by the same almighty power be carried through the dominions of satan, "in the sight of their enemies," (tormented with the remembrance of their lost happiness, and envy that human souls should partake of it) to the place of God's glorious residence.

I shall also observe, that as the Lord is a God of power, so he is a God of order, and uses subordinate means for the accomplishment of his will. Our Saviour has revealed, that the angels transport the separate souls of the righteous to heaven: those glorious spirits, who always behold the face of God, such is their exact obedience to him, and perfect love to his children, that they disdain not to protect his little ones in this open state. They "rejoice at the conversion of sinners," Matt. 18. 10. at their first entrance into the way of life, and with tender watchfulness encompass them here, never withdrawing their protecting presence, till they bring them to their celestial country, and resign their charge to the Lord of life. How safe are the departed saints, when conveyed through satan's territories by the royal guard of angels "that excel in strength?"

(2.) Heavenly felicity. The receiving of holy souls into God's hands, is introductive into his presence, which is both a sanctuary to secure us from all evil, and a storehouse to furnish us with all that is good. "The Lord is a sun and a shield:" he is to intellectual beings, what the sun is to sensitive, com-

municates light and life, and joy to them. "In his presence is fulness of joy, at his right hand are rivers of pleasure for ever." Psal. 16. 11. All that is evil and afflicting, is abolished: all that is desirable, is conferred upon his children. A glimpse or reflected ray of his reconciled and favourable countenance, even in this lower world, infuses into the hearts of his children a "joy unspeakable and glorious:" a taste of the divine goodness here, causes a disrelish of all the carnal sweets, the dreggy delights which natural men so greedily desire. And if the faint dawn be so reviving and comfortable, what is the brightness of the full day? None can understand the happiness that results from the full and eternal sight of God's face, and the fruition of his love, but those who enjoy the presence of God in perfection. His goodness is truly infinite; the more the saints above know it, and enjoy it, the more they esteem it, and delight in it. His complete and communicative love satisfies the immense desires of that innumerable company of blessed spirits that are before his throne: there is no envy, no avarice, no ambition in that kingdom, where "God is all in all."

The divine presence is an ever-flowing fountain of felicity. The continual reflection upon this, makes heaven to be heaven to the blessed: their security is as valuable as their felicity: they are above all danger of losing it. Methinks the belief of this should cause us, as it were with wings of fire, with most ardent desires to fly to the bosom of God, the alone centre of our souls, where we shall rest for ever.

(3.) The reception of the soul into heaven is a certain pledge of the resurrection of the body, and its re-union with the soul in the state of glory. The covenant of God was made with the entire persons of believers: therefore under the law the sacred seal of it was in their flesh. To be the God of promise to them, implies his being a blessed rewarder to them. Our Saviour silences the sadducees, who disbelieved the resurrection, from the tenour of God's covenant, "I am the God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob," which title he was pleased to retain after their death; "now God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." The immediate inference from thence is, that their souls did actually live in blessedness, and that their bodies, though dead to nature, were alive to God with respect to his promise and power. If we consider that the divine law binds

the outward man as well as the inward, and that during the time of our work and trial here, our service and sufferings for the glory of God are from the concurrence of the soul and body, it will appear that the promise of the reward belongs to both, and that the receiving of the soul into heaven, is an earnest of our full redemption, even that of the body. It is true, there is no visible difference between the bodies of the saints and of the wicked here; they are sick with the same diseases, and die in the same manner. As it is with trees in deep winter, when they are covered with snow, we cannot distinguish which are absolutely dead and destined to the axe and fire, and which retain their sap, and will be fruitful and flourishing in the returning year: so the dead bodies of the godly and ungodly, to external appearance, are alike: but what a vast difference will be between them in the next world! The bodies of the ungodly, in conjunction with their souls, shall be cast into the lake of fire; the bodies of the godly resumed by their souls, shall enjoy a full and flourishing happiness for ever.

THE APPLICATION.

1. This may inform us of the contrary states into which dying persons immediately pass: the children of God resign their spirits to the hands of their gracious heavenly Father, but rebels and strangers to God, fall "into the hands of" a revenging Judge. Could we see the attending spirits that surround sick persons in their last hours, what a wonderful impression would it make upon us? A guard of glorious angels convey the departed saints to the bosom of God's love, and the kingdom of his glory. But when the wicked die, a legion of furies seize upon their expected prey, and hurry them to the infernal prison, from whence there is no redemption.

How many rebels and open enemies to God are in the pale of the christian church? They will loudly repeat, "Our Father which art in heaven," notwithstanding the impudent and palpable atheism of their lives: they live as if they were independent, and not accountable to him "who will judge the world without respect of persons." The more strict his commands are, the contempt of them is more visible. Our Saviour's prohibition is peremptory, "I say unto you, swear not at all:"

but how many make no more conscience of swearing than they do of speaking, and pour forth oaths of all fashions and sizes. We are severely forbid all degrees of impurity, in the look, in words, or in wish; yet how many without reflection or remorse, continue in the deepest pollutions! We are commanded to "live soberly in this present world;" yet how many indulge their swinish appetites, and debase themselves even below the beasts that perish. And as the sensual appetites are notoriously predominant in some, so the angry appetite is tyrannous in others, pride, wrath, revenge, possess the breasts of many: how often for a slight, or but reputed injury, they are so fired with passion, that their hot blood cannot be satisfied without the cold blood of their enemies. In short, many live in such open defiance of the divine law, as if there were no God to see and punish their sins, or as if they would make a trial whether he will be true to his threatening, and revenge their bold impieties: they are partly worse than brutes; for having an understanding faculty, a principle of reason, they submit it to sense: and partly worse than devils; for, as the devils, they rebel against God, and yet not, as they, tremble in their rebellion. Now when death is ready with its cold hands to close their eyes, and conscience awakes out of its slumber, what horrors seize upon them! They are stripped of their carnal securities, the creature cannot help them, and the Creator will not. They have been enemies to that love that made them and preserved them, and, notwithstanding their violent provocations, has spared them so long. They have rejected that infinitely condescending and compassionate love, that so tenderly beseeched them to be reconciled to God, as if it were his interest to save them. Whither will they fly from their Judge? What can rescue them from instant and irrevocable misery? Can they hope that mercy will be their advocate? Their condemnation is so righteous, that mercy cannot dispense with it. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God," who lives for ever, and can punish for ever. Who "knows the power of his wrath?" It is boundless beyond all our thoughts and time. O take notice of this with terror, "all ye that forget God, lest he tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver!" Psal. 50. 22.

Others are not so visibly disobedient as notorious sinners, but are as really. You may see their picture in the disobedient son,

mentioned by our Saviour in the gospel, who "when his father commanded him to go work in the vineyard, answered, I go, Sir, and went not." Matt. 21. 28, 30. It is true, they perform the external part of some duties, and abstain from the gross acts of some sins, but it is with an exception and a reserve. A duty that is contrary to their carnal appetites and interest, they will not perform; a sin that bribes them with profit or pleasure, a temperamental sin, they will not part with. Now any indulged habitual lust "is not the spot of God's children," but denominates the sinner a child of the devil: for though the saints till they are divested of frail flesh, have their allays, and cannot be exempt from the relics of sin; yet the divine nature communicated to them, is opposite to every sin, and is an active principle to subdue sin.

And from hence St. John tells us, "He that is born of God, cannot sin," that is, deliberately and habitually: such sinners, though in the hour of death they may address with all the applying titles, "our Father, and our God," shall ever be excluded from his sacred and saving protection.

2. Let us seriously consider whether we are of this spiritual progeny, the children of God, not only in title, but in reality. The inquiry is of infinite moment; for all the promises and privileges of the gospel are annexed to this sonship: this secures us from "the wrath to come," and entitles us to the eternal inheritance; "Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Luke 12. 32. This inquiry is very useful to calm and quiet the troubled saints, and to awaken unregenerate persons out of their confident dream of their good state. Many sincere christians are infinitely concerned whether they are the children of God; of this their tears and fears give abundant evidence. The reasons of their doubts are partly the jealousy of their own hearts, which are naturally "deceitful above all things," and most deceitful to a man's self; and partly from the consequence of the deceit: for knowing the inestimable value of this privilege, "to be the sons of God," and that if they are deceived in it, they are undone for ever, they are anxiously thoughtful about it. But carnal persons who are not acquainted with the hypocrisy of their hearts, nor duly understand the excellence of the privilege, easily believe what they coldly desire. And the great deceiver of souls is equally

subtile to varnish what is evil with the false colours of good, and to conceal what is good under the appearance of evil. From hence it is, that many tender spirited christians are timorous, and full of unquiet agitations all their lives: and many who have but a show and fair pretence of religion, are undisturbed and hopeful, till at last they fall from their supposed heaven and high hopes, into the abyss of misery.

This trial will be most clear and convincing, by representing from scripture the inseparable properties and characters of the children of God, that distinguish them from all that are in the state of unrenewed nature. The apostle tells sincere christians, "The Spirit itself witnesses with our spirits, that we are the children of God." Here is a consent and agreement of those witnesses, in whom are all that are requisite to give value to their testimony. For the Spirit of God, such is his unerring knowledge, "who searches the deep things of God," and such is the absolute sanctity of his nature, that he can neither deceive nor be deceived, so that his testimony is infinitely sure, and of more worth than the concurrent testimony of heaven and earth, of angels and men. The other witness is the renewed conscience, that is acquainted with the aims and affections of the heart, as the apostle saith, "Who knows the things of a man, save the spirit of a man?" This faculty reflects upon our actions, and the principles of them: to this faculty is referred the decision of our spiritual state: "If our hearts condemn us not" of any allowed sin, "then have we peace towards God." 1 John 3. 20. From the consent and agreement of these witnesses, there is a blessed assurance of our evangelical sonship, that overcomes all our fears. Now this testimony is rational and argumentative, from the discovery of those graces that constitute a person the child of God. I will make the inquiry concerning the grace of faith and of love, which are the vital bands of our union with Christ, the principal fruits of the sanctifying Spirit, and the symptoms of salvation.

(1.) The grace of faith is expressed in scripture by "receiving of Christ;" John 1. 12. this answers to God's offer of him to our acceptance in the gospel. It receives him entirely in his person and natures, as the incarnate Son of God: and in his office, as "a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins." Acts 5. 13. This receiving Christ implies an

act of the understanding and the will; the understanding assents to thetruth of the divine revelation, that Christ crucified is an all-sufficient Saviour; and the will closes with the terms of it, "That he will save to the uttermost all that obey him:" from hence it follows, that reliance upon him, and a sincere resolution to obey him, are necessarily included in saving faith. This scripture-account distinguishes between that substantial faith that is proper to the elect children of God, and the shadow of it in the unregenerate; the one is the intimate and active principle of obedience, the other is a dead assent without efficacy, a mere carcass and counterfeit of faith. A sincere believer as fervently desires to be saved from the dominion and pollution of his sins, as from the guilt and deadly malignity: a carnal man desires an interest in Christ as a Saviour, that he may securely enjoy his lusts.

The crafty and cursed serpent deceives men to their ruin, by citing scripture, and misapplying it. The promise is sure, "Whoever believes, shall be saved;" and he easily persuades them they are believers. It is strange to astonishment, that men who have reason and understanding, should presume in a high degree of the present favour of God, and their future happiness, as if they were his dear children, when their enmity against his holy name and will is evident in their actions.

We can never have too firm a dependance on God's promise, when we are qualified for that dependance. "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord; and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and will be a Father to you, saith the Lord Almighty." 2 Cor. 6. 17, 18. Faith that purifies the heart and conversation, invests us with this blessed privilege, and all the saving mercies annexed to it.

(2.) From the spiritual relation between God and believers, there naturally and necessarily results a sincere, dutiful, child-like love to him, correspondent to his beneficent and fatherly love to them: this God indispensably requires, and specially delights in; "Thou lovest truth in the inward parts." Psal. 51. Filial obedience is inseparable from filial love in its reality: "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments." 1 John 5. 3. Our Saviour distinguishes between sincere lovers of him, and pretended, that "they who love him, keep his

commandments; but they who love him not, keep not his commandments." John 14. 23, 24.

The obedience that springs from love to God is uniform, respects all his commands: for the two filial affections, an ardent desire to please God in all things, and an ingenuous fear of displeasing him in any thing, are inseparably joined with our love to him.

The obedience that proceeds from love, is free and voluntary, from inclination as well as duty. How passionately does the holy psalmist express his affection, "O how I love thy law!" In the covenant of grace, God promises to "write his law in the hearts of his children:" not only in their minds and memories, but to endear it to their affections. There is much difference between servile and constrained obedience, and filial chosen obedience, as between the motion of a living man from the soul, the inward spring of life, and the motion of an image or statue from forcible weights and wheels.

From filial love proceeds godly sorrow, if at any time by carelessness and surprise, or an overpowering temptation, his children do what is offensive and odious in his sight. When they consider their unkind and unthankful returns for his mercies, they look to their heavenly Father with grief and shame, and down upon themselves with abhorrence and indignation. They are wounded with the sting of that expostulation, "Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise? Is he not thy Father who bought thee?" Deut. 32. 6.

From filial love proceeds a zeal for his glory; "If I be a father, where is my honour?" A child of God is dearly concerned that his name be reverenced and magnified, his laws be observed, his worship maintained, that his interest be advanced in the world. He has a burning zeal against sin and presumptuous sinners. The prophet Elijah says, "I have been jealous for the Lord of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, and thrown down thine altars." Those who with an indifferent eye see the cause, the truth, the interest of God depressed in the world, do renounce the title of his children.

From the relation to God as his sons, proceeds a sincere fervent love to all the saints. St. John infers, "Every one that

loveth him that begat, loveth him that is begotten." 1 John 5. 1. Grace is not less powerful in producing cordial mutual affections between the children of the same heavenly Father, than the subordinate endearments of nature. Notwithstanding the civil distinction between them, some high and rich, others mean and poor, yet there is a spiritual equality; the lowest saints are princes of the blood-royal of heaven. "To him that has washed us from our sins in his blood, and made us kings and priests to God, be glory for ever." Rev. 1. 5.

The filial relation to God inclines and encourages all sincere christians to resign themselves, even in their most afflicted condition, to the wisdom and will of God. Our Saviour meekly yielded up himself to his cruel enemies, upon this consideration, "The cup which my Father has given me, shall I not drink it?" John 18. 11. The saints in imitation of Christ, and upon the same ground, entirely resign themselves to the divine disposal; for their heavenly Father loves them better than they can love themselves.

Finally. The filial relation to God is productive, as of lively hopes, so of ardent desires to be with him. Love makes them to esteem communion with him here in his holy ordinances, as the joy of their lives. The psalmist when banished from the tabernacle, breaks forth in his impatient desires, "When shall I come and appear before God?" that is, in the place where he communicates his grace to those that worship him. But our Father is in heaven as his throne, and most gloriously exhibits himself to his saints there. The earth is the element and residence of carnal men, of their souls as well as their bodies: they desire their "inheritance may be on this side Jordan," and are content to leave the heavenly Canaan to those who like it. But those who "are born from above," desire "to be dissolved," that they may be in their Father's house, and his reviving presence for ever.

3. Let us be persuaded to prepare for the reception of our souls in the next world. The present life is a passage to eternity, and it is so short and fading, so uncertain and hazardous, that it is our principal wisdom without delay to secure our souls in the future state. Our Saviour says, "I must work the work of him that sent me while it is day: the night cometh when no man can work. Now is the accepted time, now is the day of

salvation." John 9. 4. It is our indispensable duty, and main interest now, "to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling." In the state of death there is an incapacity to do any thing in order to salvation: "there is no work nor wisdom in the grave:" and all the offers of salvation cease for ever. The sufferings of the Son of God are not a ransom for sinners in that state: "He reconciled things in earth and in heaven," but not things in hell. The golden sceptre is extended to none there, the Holy Spirit strives with none, they are without the reserves of mercy. The guilt of sin remains in its full obligation, the pollution of sin in its deepest dye, and the punishment of sin in its extremity for ever.

O what folly is it, or rather frenzy, not to provide for our souls in their greatest exigence! Common reason instructs us, knowing our own weakness, to commit our treasure to the custody of our friends, which we cannot otherwise keep from our enemies; especially to such a friend as can and will preserve it for our use and advantage. The soul is our jewel above all price, it is our wisdom to secure it out of all danger: let us therefore commit it to the safe and sure hands of our heavenly Father, otherwise we cannot preserve it from the infernal spirits, the robbers and murderers of souls.

The wise preacher denounces a fearful evil, "Woe be to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up." Eccles. 4. 10. In all the senses of falling, death is the greatest fall: the high, the honourable, the rich, fall from all their state; and men of all degrees are forsaken of all their carnal comforts and supports. If then the solitary soul has not a God to receive, support and comfort it, how woful is its condition! Methinks the apprehension of this should strike a terror so deep into the hearts of men, that they should be restless till they have secured a retreat for their departing souls.

For this end let us, according to the earnest advice of St. Peter, "be diligent, that we may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless." 2 Pet. 3.

The Lord Jesus is the only peace-maker of the righteous and holy God to sinners. The Judge of this world is flaming with wrath, and terrible in vengeance to sinners that appear before his tribunal out of Christ. We shall for ever be excluded from his blessed communion, without the Mediator restore us to his

favour. Our reconciliation only is by "redemption in his blood." Col. 1. 20. "The chastisement of our peace was upon him." He is "the Lord our righteousness," by whom alone we can stand in judgment. "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself." There is now an act of oblivion offered in the gospel to all that come "to God by him." We have sure salvation in his name: but we must with consenting wills, close with him as our Lord and life. The first gospel preached by the angel after his coming into the world, declares, "There was born in the city of David a Saviour, Christ the Lord." We must not separate between Christ the Saviour, and Christ the Lord; between his salvation and his dominion. God indispensably requires we should resign ourselves to his Son as our king, and rely upon him as our priest to atone his displeasure. If we thus receive him, he will restore us to the favour and peace of God, established in an everlasting covenant.

How tenderly and compassionately does the great God invite sinners to re-enter into his favour, "to acquaint ourselves with him, and to be at peace! His ambassadors in his name, and in Christ's stead beseech them to be reconciled to God." But their perverse spirits would "have God reconciled to them," that they might be exempt from punishment; but are "unwilling to be reconciled to him," to part with their lusts. In short, reconciliation with God necessarily infers defiance with sin. "Ye that love the Lord hate evil." If men do not cease their rebellion, there is no shadow of hope to obtain the divine favour.

"Do you provoke the Lord to jealousy, are you stronger than he?" Jealousy is the most sensible and severe affection. As it is with a town taken by storm, all that are found in arms are without mercy cut off; so all that at death are found with the "weapons of unrighteousness," their unrepented unforsaken sins about them, must expect "judgment without mercy."

Lastly. Let the children of God be encouraged with peace and joy to commend their souls to him. Let rebellious sinners tremble with deadly fear upon the brink of eternity; but let the saints, with a lively hope, enter into the divine world.

If men possess their treasure with joy and jealousy, and guard it with vigilant care, will not God preserve his dearest treasure, the souls of his children committed to his trust?

Can love forsake, can truth deceive, can almighty power fail? Will a father, a heavenly Father, be without bowels to his own offspring? No, he cannot deny himself: he is readiest to relieve, when they are in distress.

Old Simeon is a leading example to believers: after he had embraced Christ in his arms, how earnestly did he desire his dissolution? "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." St. Stephen in the midst of a shower of stones, with a blessed tranquillity, makes his dying prayer, "Lord Jesus receive my spirit." If the fears of humble souls arise in that hour, because they have not the conspicuous marks of God's children, the grace of the Spirit in that degree of eminency, as some saints have had: let them consider, there are different ages among the children of God: some are in a state of infancy and infirmity; others are more confirmed: but the relation is the same in all, and gives an interest in his promised mercy. The weakness of their faith cannot frustrate God's faithfulness. It is the sincerity, not the strength of grace, that is requisite to salvation. If faith be shaking "as a bruised reed," and but kindling as the "smoking flax," it shall be victorious. O that these powerful comforts may encourage dying christians to commend their souls with ardency and assurance to God, their father, and felicity.

I have now finished my discourse upon the text, and shall apply myself to speak of the other subject, the Reverend Mr. Richard Baxter, that excellent instrument of divine grace, to recover and restore so many revolted souls to God, out of the empire of his enemy: or in the apostle's language, "to translate them from the kingdom of darkness, into the kingdom of his dear Son." Col. 1. 13. I am sensible, that in speaking of him I shall be under a double disadvantage: for those who perfectly knew him, will be apt to think my account of him to be short and defective, an imperfect shadow of his resplendent virtues: others who were unacquainted with his extraordinary worth, will from ignorance or envy be inclined to think his just praises to be undue and excessive. Indeed if love could make me eloquent, I should use all the most lively and graceful colours of language to adorn his memory: but this consideration relieves me in the consciousness of my disability, that a plain narrative

of what Mr. Baxter was, and did, will be a most noble elogy: and that his substantial piety no more needs artificial oratory to set it off, than refined gold wants paint to add lustre and value to it.

I shall not speak of his parentage, and his first years: but I must not omit a testimony I received concerning his early piety. His father said with tears of joy to a friend, my son Richard I hope was sanctified from the womb: for when he was a little boy in coats, if he heard other children in play speak profane words, he would reprove them to the wonder of those that heard him.

He had not the advantage of academical education: but by the divine blessing upon his rare dexterity and diligence, his sacred knowledge was in that degree of eminence, as few in the University ever arrive to. Not long after his entrance into the ministry the civil war began, and the times rained blood so long, till the languishing state of the kingdom, was almost desperate and incurable. How far he was concerned as a chaplain in the parliament's army, he has published an account, and the reasons of it.

After the war, he was fixed at Kidderminster. There his ministry by the divine influence, was of admirable efficacy. The harvest answered the seed that was sowed. Before his coming, the place was like a piece of dry and barren earth, only ignorance and profaneness as natives of the soil were rife among them; but by the blessing of heaven upon his labour and cultivating, the face of paradise appeared there in all the fruits of righteousness. Many were translated from the state of polluted nature, to the state of grace; and many were advanced to higher degrees of holiness. The bad were changed to good, and the good to better. Conversion is the excellent work of divine grace: the efficacy of the means is from the Supreme Mover. But God usually makes those ministers successful in that blessed work, whose principal design and delight is to glorify him in the saving of souls. This was the reigning affection in his heart; and he was extraordinarily qualified to obtain his end.

His prayers were an effusion of the most lively melting expressions, and his intimate ardent affections to God; from the "abundance of the heart his lips spake." His soul took wing for heaven, and rapt up the souls of others with him. Never did

I see or hear a holy minister address himself to God with more reverence and humility, with respect to his glorious greatness; never with more zeal and fervency correspondent to the infinite moment of his requests; nor with more filial affiance in the divine mercy.

In his sermons there was a rare union of arguments and motives to convince the mind and gain the heart: all the fountains of reason and persuasion were open to his discerning eye. There was no resisting the force of his discourses without denying reason and divine revelation. He had a marvellous felicity and copiousness in speaking. There was a noble negligence in his style: for his great mind could not stoop to the affected eloquence of words: he despised flashy oratory: but his expressions were clear and powerful, so convincing the understanding, so entering into the soul, so engaging the affections, that those were as deaf as adders, who were not "charmed by so wise a charmer." He was animated with the Holy Spirit, and breathed celestial fire, to inspire heat and life into dead sinners, and to melt the obdurate in their frozen tombs. Methinks I still hear him speak those powerful words: * 'A wretch that is condemned to die to-morrow cannot forget it: and yet poor sinners, that continually are uncertain to live an hour, and certain speedily to see the majesty of the Lord to their inconceivable joy or terror, as sure as they now live on earth, can forget these things for which they have their memory: and which one would think should drown the matters of this world, as the report of a cannon does a whisper, or as the sun obscures the poorest glow-worm. O wonderful stupidity of an unrenewed soul! O wonderful folly and distractedness of the ungodly! That ever men can forget, I say again, that they can forget, eternal joy, eternal woe, and the eternal God, and the place of their eternal unchangeable abodes, when they stand even at the door; and there is but a thin veil of flesh between them and that amazing sight, that eternal gulf, and they are daily dying and stepping in.'

Besides, his wonderful diligence in catechising the particular families under his charge, was exceeding useful to plant religion in them. Personal instruction, and application of divine truths,

* His sermon before the House of Commons, 1660.

have an excellent advantage and efficacy to insinuate and infuse religion into the minds and hearts of men, and by the conversion of parents and masters to reform whole families that are under their immediate direction and government. While he was at Kidderminster, he wrote and published that accomplished model of an evangelical minister, styled *Gildae Salvianus*, or the Reformed Pastor: in that book he clears beyond all cavil, that the duty of ministers is not confined to their study and the pulpit, but that they should make use of opportunities to instruct families within their care, as it is said by the apostle, that he had kept back nothing from his hearers "that was profitable, but had taught them publicly, and from house to house." The idea of a faithful minister delineated in that book, was a copy taken from the life, from his own zealous example. His unwearied industry to do good to his flock, was answered by correspondent love and thankfulness. He was an angel in their esteem. He would often speak with great complacence of their dear affections: and a little before his death, said, he believed they were more expressive of kindness to him, than the christian converts were to the apostle Paul, by what appears in his writings.

While he remained at Kidderminster, his illustrious worth was not shaded in a corner, but dispersed its beams and influence round the country. By his counsel and excitation, the ministers in Worcestershire, episcopal, presbyterian and congregational were united, that by their studies, labours, and advice, the doctrine and practice of religion, the truths and holiness of the gospel might be preserved in all the churches committed to their charge. This association was of excellent use, the ends of church-government were obtained by it: and it was a leading example to the ministers of other counties. Mr. Baxter was not above his brethren ministers, by a superior title, or any secular advantage, but by his divine endowments and separate excellencies, his extraordinary wisdom, zeal, and fidelity: he was the soul of that happy society.

He continued among his beloved people, till the year 1660; then he came to London. A while after the king's restoration, there were many endeavours used in order to an agreement between the episcopal and presbyterian ministers. For this end several of the bishops elect, and of the ministers, were called to

attend the king at Worcester-house: there was read to them a declaration, drawn up with great wisdom and moderation, by the lord chancellor the earl of Clarendon. I shall only observe that in reading the several parts of the declaration, Dr. Morley was the principal manager of the conference among the bishops, and Mr. Baxter among the ministers: and one particular I cannot forget; it was desired by the ministers, that the bishops should exercise their church power with the counsel and consent of presbyters. This limiting of their authority was so displeasing, that Dr. Cosins, then elect of Durham, said, If your majesty grants this you will unbishop your bishops. Dr. Reynolds upon this produced the book, entitled, 'The portraiture of his sacred majesty in his solitude and sufferings,' and read the following passage: 'Not that I am against the managing of this presidency and authority in one man by the joint counsel and consent of many presbyters: I have offered to restore that, as a fit means to avoid those errors, corruptions and partialities, which are incident to any one man: also to avoid tyranny, which becomes no christians, least of all church-men. Besides, it will be a means to take away that burden and odium of affairs, which may lie too heavy on one man's shoulders, as indeed I think it did formerly on the bishops here.' The good doctor thought, that the judgment of the king's afflicted and inquiring father would have been of great moment to incline him to that temperament: but the king presently replied, 'All that is in that book is not gospel.' My lord chancellor prudently moderated in that matter, that the bishops, in weighty causes, should have the assistance of the presbyters.

Mr. Baxter considering the state of our affairs in that time, was well pleased with that declaration: he was of Calvin's mind, who judiciously observes, upon our Saviour's words, that "the Son of Man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend;" *Qui ad extirpandum quicquid displicet præpostere festinant, antevertant christi judicium, & ereptum angelis officium sibi temere usurpant.* 'They that make too much haste to redress at once all things that are amiss, anticipate the judgment of Christ, and rashly usurp the office of the angels.' Besides, that declaration granted such a freedom to conscientious ministers, that were unsatisfied as to the old conformity, that if it had been observed, it

had prevented the doleful division succeeded afterward. But when there was a motion made in the house of commons, that the declaration might pass into an act, it was opposed by one of the secretaries of state, which was a sufficient indication of the king's averseness to it.

After the declaration there were many conferences at the Savoy between the bishops and some doctors of their party, with Mr. Baxter and some other ministers, for an agreement, wherein his zeal for peace was most conspicuous: but all was in vain. Of the particulars that were debated, he has given an account in print.

Mr. Baxter, after his coming to London, during the time of liberty, did not neglect that which was the principal exercise of his life, the preaching the gospel, being always sensible of his duty of saving souls. He preached at St. Dunstan's on the Lord's-days in the afternoon. I remember one instance of his firm faith in the divine providence, and his fortitude when he was engaged in his ministry there. The church was old, and the people were apprehensive of some danger in meeting in it: and while Mr. Baxter was preaching, something in the steeple fell down, and the noise struck such a terror into the people, they presently, in a wild disorder, ran out of the church: their eagerness to haste away, put all into a tumult: Mr. Baxter, without visible disturbance, sat down in the pulpit: after the hurry was over, he resumed his discourse, and said, to compose their minds; 'We are in the service of God to prepare ourselves, that we may be fearless at the great noise of the dissolving world, when the heavens shall pass away, and the elements melt in fervent heat; the earth also, and the works therein shall be burnt up.'

After the church of St. Dunstan's was pulled down in order to its re-building, he removed to Black-Friars, and continued his preaching there to a vast concourse of hearers, till the fatal Bartholomew.

In the year 1661, a parliament was called, wherein was passed the act of uniformity, that expelled from their public places about two thousand ministers. I will only take notice concerning the causes of that proceeding, that the old clergy from wrath and revenge, and the young gentry from their servile compliance with the court, and their distaste of serious religion,

were very active to carry on and complete that act. That this is no rash imputation upon the ruling clergy then is evident, not only from their concurrence in passing that law, for actions have a language as convincing as that of words, but from Dr. Sheldon then bishop of London their great leader; who when the lord chamberlain Manchester told the king, while the act of uniformity was under debate, 'that he was afraid the terms of it were so rigid, that many of the ministers would not comply with it;' he replied, 'I am afraid they will.' This act was passed after the king had engaged his faith and honour in his declaration from Breda, 'to preserve the liberty of conscience inviolate,' which promise opened the way for his restoration; and after the royalists here, had given public assurance, that all former animosities should be buried, 'as rubbish under the foundation of a universal concord.' Mr. Baxter was involved with so many ministers in this calamity, who was their brightest ornament, and the best defence of their righteous, though oppressed cause: two observations he made upon that act and our ejection.

The one was, that the ministers were turned and kept out from the public exercise of their office, in that time of their lives, that was most fit to be dedicated and employed for the service and glory of God, that is between thirty and sixty years, when their intellectual and instrumental faculties were in their vigour. The other was in a letter to me after the death of several bishops who were concurrent in passing that act, and expressed no sorrow for it: his words were, 'for ought I see, the bishops will own the turning of us out, at the tribunal of Christ, and thither we appeal.'

After the act of uniformity had taken its effect, in the ejection of so many ministers, there was sometimes a connivance at the private exercise of their ministry, sometimes public indulgence granted, and often a severe prosecution of them, as the popish and politic interest of the court varied. When there was liberty, Mr. Baxter applied himself to his delightful work, to the great advantage of those who enjoyed his ministry. But the church-party opposed vehemently the liberty that was granted. Indeed such was their fierceness, that if the dissenting ministers 'had been as wise as serpents, and as innocent as doves,' they could not escape their deep censures. The pulpit

represented them as seditiously disaffected to the state, as obstinate schismatics, and often the 'Name of God was not only taken in vain, but in violence,' to authorize their hard speeches, and harder actions against them. Some drops of that storm fell upon Mr. Baxter, who calmly submitted to their injurious dealings. I shall speak of that afterward.

In the interval, between his deprivation and his death, he wrote and published the most of his books, of which I shall give some account.

His books, for their number and variety of matter in them, make a library. They contain a treasure of controversial, casuistical, positive and practical divinity. Of them I shall relate the words of one, whose exact judgment, joined with his moderation, will give a great value to his testimony; they are of the very Reverend Dr. Wilkins, afterwards bishop of Chester: he said that Mr. Baxter had 'cultivated every subject he handled; and if he had lived in the primitive times, he had been one of the fathers of the church.' I shall add what he said with admiration of him another time, 'That it was enough for one age to produce such a person as Mr. Baxter.' Indeed, he had such an amplitude in his thoughts, such vivacity of imagination, and such solidity and depth of judgment, as rarely meet together. His inquiring mind was freed from the servile dejection and bondage of an implicit faith. He adhered to the scriptures as the perfect rule of faith, and searched whether the doctrines received and taught were consonant to it. This is the duty of every christian according to his capacity, especially of ministers, and the necessary means to open the mind for divine knowledge, and for the advancement of the truth. He published several books against the papists with that clearness and strength, as will confound, if not convince them. He said, 'he only desired armies and antiquity against the papists:' armies, because of their bloody religion so often exemplified in England, Ireland, France and other countries. However they may appear on the stage, they are always the same persons in the tiring-room: their religion binds them to extirpate heretics, and often overrules the milder inclinations of their nature: antiquity, because they are inveigled with a fond pretence to it, as if it were favourable to their cause: but it has been demonstrated by many

learned protestants, that the argument of antiquity is directly against the principal doctrines of popery, as that of the supremacy, of transubstantiation, of image-worship, and others.

He has wrote several excellent books * against the impudent atheism of this loose age. In them he establishes the fundamental principle, upon which the whole fabric of christianity is built; that after this short uncertain life, there is a future state of happiness or misery equally eternal, and that death is the last irrevocable step into that unchangeable state. From hence it follows by infallible consequence, that the reasonable creature should prefer the interest of the soul before that of the body, and secure eternal life. This being laid, he proves the christian religion to be the only way of fallen man's being restored to the favour of God, and obtaining a blessed immortality. This great argument he manages with that clearness and strength, that none can refuse assent unto it, without denying the infallible principles of faith, and the evident principles of nature.

He also published some warm discourses, to apologize for the preaching of dissenting ministers, and to excite them to do their duty. He did not think that the act of uniformity could disoblige them from the exercise of their office. It is true, magistrates are titular-gods by their deputation and vicegerency, but subordinate and accountable to God above. Their laws have no binding force upon the conscience, but from his command; and if contrary to his law, are to be disobeyed. The ministers consecrated to the service of God are under a moral perpetual obligation of preaching the saving truths of the gospel, as they have opportunity. There needs no miraculous testimony of their commission from heaven, to authorise the doing their ordinary duty.

In some points of modern controversy he judiciously chose the middle way, and advised young divines to follow it. His reverence of the divine purity, made him very shy and jealous of any doctrine that seemed to reflect a blemish and stain upon it. He was a clear asserter of the sovereign freeness, and infallible efficacy of divine grace in the conversion of souls. In a sermon

* His books of the reasonableness of the christian religion.

reading the words of the covenant of grace, "I will put my fear into their hearts, and they shall not depart from me;" he observed the tenour of it was, "I will, and you shall." Divine grace makes the rebellious will obedient, but does not make the will to be no will. By the illumination of the mind, the will is inclined to obedience, according to the words of our Saviour, "All that have heard and learned of the Father come to me." He preached that the death of Christ was certainly effectual for all the elect to make them partakers of grace and glory; and that it was so far beneficial to all men, that they are not left in the same desperate state with the fallen angels, but are made capable of salvation by the grace of the gospel: not capable as efficients to convert themselves, but as subjects to receive saving grace. He did so honour the sincerity of God, as entirely to believe his will declared in his word: he would not interpret the promises of the gospel in a less gracious sense than God intended them: therefore if men finally perish, it is not for want of mercy in God, nor merits in Christ, but for their wilfully refusing salvation.

His books of practical divinity have been effectual for more numerous conversions of sinners to God, than any printed in our time: and while the church remains on earth, will be of continual efficacy to recover lost souls. There is a vigorous pulse in them that keeps the reader awake and attentive. His book of the Saints' Everlasting Rest, was written by him when languishing in the suspense of life and death, but has the signatures of his holy and vigorous mind. To allure our desires, he unveils the sanctuary above, and discovers the glory and joys of the blessed in the divine presence, by a light so strong and lively, that all the glittering vanities of this world vanish in that comparison, and a sincere believer will despise them, as one of mature age does the toys and baubles of children. To excite our fear he removes the screen, and makes the everlasting fire of hell so visible, and represents the tormenting passions of the damned in those dreadful colours, that if duly considered, would check and control the unbridled licentious appetites of the most sensual wretches.

His 'Call to the Unconverted;' how small in bulk, but how powerful in virtue? Truth speaks in it with that authority and efficacy, that it makes the reader to lay his hand upon his heart,

and find he has a soul and a conscience, though he lived before as if he had none. He told some friends, that six brothers were converted by reading that Call; and that every week he received letters of some converted by his books. This he spake with most humble thankfulness, that God was pleased to use him as an instrument for the salvation of souls.

He that was so solicitous for the salvation of others, was not negligent of his own; but as regular love requires, his first care was to prepare himself for heaven. In him the virtues of the contemplative and active life were eminently united. His time was spent in communion with God, and in charity to men. He lived above the sensible world, and in solitude and silence conversed with God. The frequent and serious meditation of eternal things was the powerful means to make his heart holy and heavenly, and from thence his conversation. His life was a practical sermon, a drawing example. There was an air of humility and sanctity in his mortified countenance; and his deportment was becoming a stranger upon earth, and a citizen of heaven.

Though all divine graces, the "fruit of the Spirit," were visible in his conversation, yet some were more eminent.

Humility is to other graces, as the morning-star is to the sun, that goes before it, and follows it in the evening: humility prepares us for the receiving of grace, "God gives grace to the humble:" and it follows the exercise of grace; "Not I," says the apostle, "but the grace of God in me." In Mr. Baxter there was a rare union of sublime knowledge, and other spiritual excellencies, with the lowest opinion of himself. He wrote to one that sent a letter to him full of expressions of honour and esteem, 'You do admire one you do not know; knowledge will cure your error. The more we know God, the more reason we see to admire him;' but our knowledge of the creature discovers its imperfections, and lessens our esteem. To the same person expressing his veneration of him for his excellent gifts and graces, he replied with heat, 'I have the remainders of pride in me, how dare you blow up the sparks of it?' He desired some ministers, his chosen friends, to meet at his house, and spend a day in prayer for his direction in a matter of moment: before the duty was begun, he said, 'I have desired your assistance at this time, because I believe God will sooner hear your prayers than

mine.' He imitated St. Austin both in his penitential confessions, and retractions. In conjunction with humility, he had great candour for others. He could willingly bear with persons of differing sentiments: 'he would not prostitute his own judgment, nor ravish anothers.' He did not over-esteem himself; nor under-value others. He would give liberal encomiums of many conforming divines. He was severe to himself, but candid in excusing the faults of others. Whereas, the busy inquirer and censurer of the faults of others, is usually the easy neglecter of his own.

Self-denial and contempt of the world were shining graces in him. I never knew any person less indulgent to himself, and more indifferent to his temporal interest. The offer of a bishopric was no temptation to him: for his exalted soul despised the pleasures and profits which others so earnestly desire; he valued not an empty title upon his tomb.

His patience was truly christian. God does often try his children by afflictions, to exercise their graces, to occasion their victory, and to entitle them to a triumphant felicity.

This saint was tried by many afflictions. We are very tender of our reputation: his name was obscured under a cloud of detraction. Many slanderous darts were thrown at him. He was charged with schism and sedition. He was accused for his paraphrase upon the New Testament, as guilty of disloyal aspersions upon the government, and condemned, unheard, to a prison, where he remained for some years. But he was so far from being moved at the unrighteous prosecution, that he joyfully said to a constant friend, 'What could I desire more of God, than after having served him to my power, I should now be called to suffer for him.' One who had been a fierce dissenter, was afterward rankled with an opposite heat, and very contumeliously in his writings reflected upon Mr. Baxter, who calmly endured his contempt: and when the same person published a learned discourse in defence of christianity, Mr. Baxter said, 'I forgive him all for his writing that book.' Indeed he was so much the more truly honourable, as he was thought worthy of the hatred of those persons.

It is true, the censures and reproaches of others whom he esteemed and loved, touched him in the tender part. But he,

with the great apostle, counted it a "small thing to be judged by man's judgment." He was entire to his conscience, and independent upon the opinion of others. But his patience was more eminently tried by his continual pains and languishing. Martyrdom is a more easy way of dying, when the combat and the victory are finished at once, than to die by degrees every day. His complaints were frequent, but who ever heard an unsubmissive word drop from his lips? He was not put out of his patience, nor out of the possession of himself. In his sharp pains, he said, 'I have a rational patience, and a believing patience, though sense would recoil.'

His pacific spirit was a clear character of his being a child of God. How ardently he endeavoured to cement the breaches among us, which others widen and keep open, is publicly known. He said to a friend, 'I can as willingly be a martyr for love, as for any article of the creed.' It is strange to astonishment, that those who agree in the substantial and great points of the reformed religion, and are of differing sentiments only in things not so clear, nor of that moment as those wherein they consent, should still be opposite parties. Methinks the remembrance how our divisions lately exposed us to our watchful adversary, and were almost fatal to the interest of religion, should conciliate our affections. Our common danger and common deliverance, should prepare our spirits for a sincere and firm union. When our sky was so dark without a glimmering horizon, then by a new dawning of God's wonderful providence, a deliverer appeared, our gracious sovereign, who has the honour of establishing our religion at home, and gives us hopes of restoring it abroad, in places from whence it has been so unrighteously and cruelly expelled. May the union of his protestant subjects in religious things so desired by wise and good men, be accomplished by his princely counsel and authority. Integrity with charity would remove those things that have so long disunited us. I return from this digression.

Love to the souls of men was the peculiar character of Mr. Baxter's spirit. In this he imitated and honoured our Saviour, who prayed, died, and lives for the salvation of souls. All his natural and supernatural endowments were subservient to this blessed end. It was 'his meat and drink,' the life and joy of

his life to do good to souls. His industry was almost incredible in his studies: he had a sensitive nature desirous of ease as others have, and faint faculties, yet such was the continual application of himself to his great work, as if the labour of one day had supplied strength for another, 'and the willingness of the spirit had supported the weakness of the flesh.' In his usual conversation, his serious, frequent and delightful discourse was of divine things, to inflame his friends with the love of heaven. He received with tender compassion and condescending kindness, the meanest that came to him for counsel and consolation. He gave in one year a hundred pounds to buy bibles for the poor. He has in his will disposed of all that remains of his estate after the legacies to his kindred, for the benefit of the souls and bodies of the poor. He continued to preach so long notwithstanding his wasted languishing body, that the last time, he almost died in the pulpit. It would have been his joy to have been 'transfigured in the mount.'

Not long after his last sermon, he felt the approaches of death, and was confined to his sick bed. Death reveals the secrets of the heart, then words are spoken with most feeling and least affectation. This excellent saint was the same in his life and death: his last hours were spent in preparing others and himself to appear before God. He said to his friends that visited him, 'You come hither to learn to die, I am not the only person that must go this way, I can assure you, that your whole life be it never so long is little enough to prepare for death. Have a care of this vain deceitful world, and the lusts of the flesh: be sure you choose God for your portion, heaven for your home, God's glory for your end, his word for your rule, and then you need never fear but we shall meet with comfort.'

Never was penitent sinner more humble and debasing himself, never was a sincere believer more calm and comfortable. He acknowledged himself to be the vilest dunghilworm (it was his usual expression) that ever went to heaven. He admired the divine condescension to us, often saying, 'Lord what is man, what am I vile worm to the great God?' Many times he prayed, "God be merciful to me a sinner," and blessed God, that that was left upon record in the gospel as an effectual

prayer. He said, 'God may justly condemn me for the best duty, I ever did, and all my hopes are from the free mercy of God in Christ,' which he often prayed for.

After a slumber he waked and said, 'I shall rest from my labour:' a minister then present said, 'And your works follow you:' to whom he replied, 'No works, I will leave out works, if God will grant me the other.' When a friend was comforting him with the remembrance of the good many had received by his preaching and writings, he said, 'I was but a pen in God's hand, and what praise is due to a pen.'

His resigned submission to the will of God in his sharp sickness, was eminent. When extremity of pain constrained him earnestly to pray to God for his release by death, he would check himself: 'It is not fit for me to prescribe, and said, when thou wilt, what thou wilt, how thou wilt.'

Being in great anguish, he said, 'O how unsearchable are his ways and his paths past finding out! the reaches of his providence we cannot fathom:' and to his friends, 'Do not think the worse of religion for what you see me suffer.'

Being often asked by his friends, how it was with his inward man, he replied, 'I bless God I have a well-grounded assurance of my eternal happiness, and great peace and comfort within; but it was his trouble he could not triumphantly express it, by reason of his extreme pains.' He said, 'Flesh must perish, and we must feel the perishing of it: and that though his judgment submitted, yet sense would still make him groan.'

Being asked by a person of quality, whether he had not great joy from his believing apprehensions of the invisible state, he replied: 'What else think you christianity serves for?' He said, 'The consideration of the Deity in his glory and greatness was too high for our thoughts; but the consideration of the Son of God in our nature, and of the saints in heaven, whom we knew and loved, did much sweeten and familiarize heaven to him.' The description of heaven in the 12. to the Hebrews and the 22. was most comfortable to him: "That he was going to the innumerable company of angels, and to the general assembly and church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven; and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect; and to Jesus the Mediator of the new

covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than the blood of Abel." That scripture, he said, 'deserved a thousand thousand thoughts:' he said, 'O how comfortable is that promise,' "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive the things God hath laid up for those who love him."

At another time he said, 'That he found great comfort and sweetness in repeating the words of the Lord's Prayer, and was sorry that some good people were prejudiced against the use of it; for there were all necessary petitions for soul and body contained in it.'

At other times he gave excellent counsel to young ministers that visited him, 'and earnestly prayed to God to bless their labours, and make them very successful in converting many souls to Christ:' and expressed great joy in the hopes that God would do a great deal of good by them; and that they were of moderate peaceful spirits.

He did often pray that God 'would be merciful to this miserable distracted world: and that he would preserve his church and interest in it.'

He advised his friends to 'beware of self-conceitedness, as a sin that was likely to ruin this nation:' and said, 'I have written a book against it, which I am afraid has done little good.'

Being asked whether he had altered his mind in controversial points, he said, 'Those that please may know my mind in my writings: and what he had done was not for his own reputation, but the glory of God.'

I went to him with a very worthy friend, Mr. Mather of New-England, the day before he died, and speaking some comforting words to him, he replied, 'I have pain, there is no arguing against sense, but I have peace, I have peace.' I told him you are now approaching to your long-desired home, he answered, 'I believe, I believe.' He said to Mr. Mather, 'I bless God that you accomplished your business, the Lord prolong your life.'

He expressed a great willingness to die, and during his sickness, when the question was asked, how he did, his reply was, 'almost well.' His joy was most remarkable, when in his own

apprehensions death was nearest: and his spiritual joy at length was consummate in eternal joy.

Thus lived and died that blessed saint. I have without any artificial fiction of words, given a sincere short account of him. All our tears are below the just grief for such an invaluable loss. It is the comfort of his friends, that he enjoys a blessed reward in heaven, and has left a precious remembrance on the earth.

Now blessed be the gracious God, that he was pleased to prolong the life of his servant, so useful and beneficial to the world to a full age: that he has brought him slowly and safely to heaven. I shall conclude this account with my own deliberate wish: may I live the short remainder of my life, as entirely to the glory of God, as he lived; and when I shall come to the period of my life, may I die in the same blessed peace wherein he died; may I be with him in the kingdom of light and love for ever.

POSTSCRIPT.

I Shall annex two passages declaratory, the one of his humility, the other of his excellent abilities. He had such an abhorrence of himself for his sins, that he said to a minister, 'I can more easily believe, that God will forgive me, than I can forgive myself.' The other was, being in the pulpit to preach, he found that he had forgot to put his notes into his bible: he prayed to God for his assistance, and took the first text that occurred to his view in opening the bible: and preached an excellent sermon for the matter and order of it upon the priesthood of Christ. After he was come down, he inquired of a minister present, whether he had not tired him, who replied, 'No;' but with several others declared they were exceedingly satisfied with his discourse; he said, 'It was necessary to have a body of divinity in one's head.'

A

SERMON

PREACHED AT THE FUNERAL

OF THE

REVEREND & EXCELLENT DIVINE

MR. DAVID CLARKSON.

PREFACE.

IT is the privilege of christianity, "that life and immortality are brought to light in the gospel." The heathen world sat in darkness, was secure in misery: as one that sleeps is pleased with the scenes of fancy; he dreams of treasures of gold, of gardens, of feasts, and thinks the painted appearances, the superficial colours of good to be realities: thus whilst reason was darkened by sense, the world was content with pleasant delusions. Who amongst the many pretenders to wisdom, had a convincing knowledge of the blessed eternity to come? Who had a glimpse of that happiness that results from the sight of God in glory? This instruction so refreshing our spirits, darkened with sorrows here, comes from the school of heaven: as the sun revives us by its cheerful appearance, and affords that light, without which it were impossible to behold it.

During the legal dispensation, there was a mist upon the future state. The notice of eternal things was a twilight mixed with shadows. The revelation of the heavenly glory was reserved till our Saviour's appearing in the world, who purchased it with the dearest price, and offers it upon such gracious terms, that whosoever sincerely desires and seeks, shall obtain it; and none shall be deprived of it, but for their wilful and guilty neglect. It might be expected that such a proposal were sufficient to engage men with all their active powers to secure such a precious interest, when indeed their best endeavours and most zealous affections are too slight and faint, with respect to that excellent happiness. Are not the first notions of things that are written in our breasts, sufficient to convince us, that what is for ever, is to be preferred before what suddenly passes away? Or is it necessary in matters of temporal concernment, to use strong arguments to persuade us rather to choose a treasure that will

enrich us for our lives, than what will purchase food only for a day? Yet it is strange to amazement, that in things of infinite weight and consequence that respect the soul, and trivial things that respect the body, men make as preposterous a judgment and choice, as if they were irreconcileable enemies to themselves, and obstinately averse from their own happiness. The life to come extends beyond all possible number of ages; the felicity is so complete and sure, that the least shadow of evil shall never eclipse it: the soul shall be in a state of highest perfection and joy; the understanding illuminated with perfect knowledge, with no more study, than opening the eye and fixing it on the glorious objects, the will satisfied with the perfect love and enjoyment of the blessed God: the body shall be clothed with light as with a garment, and shine with a beauty that never disflourishes and decays; the innumerable assembly of angels and saints always affords new and inestimable delights; and what is set in comparison against this transcendent felicity in heaven? The poor despicable vanishing life on earth: whose pleasures are so shallow and empty, that they cannot satisfy the senses, much less our noble and comprehensive faculties: whose griefs are sometimes so heavy and oppressing, that all the comforts of the world are no more effectual to relieve the soul labouring under them, than the sounding of brass, and the tinkling of cymbals, usually done by the heathens, were to free the moon from its dark eclipse, which they fancied to labour in extremity. Yet the petty preferments, the deceitful riches, the vain pleasures here are chosen, and ambitiously and eagerly pursued, and the infinite everlasting happiness hereafter undervalued and rejected. But as the wonder ceases, that a man doth not see in the clearest day, by saying, he is blind: so carnal men are without faith, that is, the internal light of the mind, they do not steadfastly believe the reality of the divine world, though so clearly opened in the gospel. They are under so strong a delusion and error of sensuality, that they vilify a spiritual happiness, a glorious futurity, and present sensible things, of no price in comparison, have the highest place in their esteem and affections. The proper means to recover man from his woful folly, are unceasing fervent prayers, that "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto them the spirit of wisdom and revelation

in the knowledge of him: the eyes of their understandings being enlightened, that they may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints:" and to represent this world, and the next, as they are to their considerate minds, that their interest and duty, with united efficacy, may overrule their hearts, and turn the stream of their endeavours into the right channel; that the judicious comparison between objects so vastly differing, may be the governing principle of their lives. All things are vain and transient, within the confines of time; all things stable and solid in the territories of eternity.

A

SERMON, &c.

JOHN XIV. 1.

In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you: I go to prepare a place for you.

OUR blessed Saviour in the words, applies heavenly comfort to his disciples, to support their drooping spirits in his absence from them: he foretold his departure; "Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me: and as I said to the Jews, whither I go, ye cannot come: so now I say unto you." Chap. 13. 33. This tenderly affected their hearts: but that their sorrow might not flow into despair, he assures them, that their separation should not be final, and that it was not the singular privilege of St. Peter, that "he should follow him hereafter;" ver. 36. but that there were rooms reserved in heaven for them all, and he would return and receive them to himself. This consolation he addresses to them in a very affectionate manner, "Let not your hearts be troubled:" chap. 19. 1. no work is more divine, none more proper and delightful to our

Saviour, than to comfort the afflicted spirits of his people. He directs them, "Ye believe in God, believe also in me." God is the supreme object of faith, his unchangeable love and faithfulness, with his infinite power in the accomplishing his promises, is the security of believers. Christ, as mediator between God and guilty creatures, is the immediate object of our faith; for he restores us to the favour of God, therefore it is said, we believe in God by him. 1 Pet. 1. 21. After this preface to calm the unquiet agitations of their minds, and make them more receptive of comfort, he proposeth to them;

1. A blessed doctrine; "In my Father's house are many mansions," capable to receive all his disciples.

2. Gives them an infallible assurance of it. 1. From his inviolable love and truth, "if it were not so, I would have told you." 2. That his going away, was not to reign alone in the kingdom of glory, "but to prepare a place for them."

The point that I shall discourse of from these words, is this; there is a blessed place above prepared for all the faithful disciples of Christ, wherein they shall be glorified with him for ever. And in the managing this argument, I will endeavour;

I. To represent the excellencies of this place specified by his Father's house, and the state of felicity that is inseparable from all that dwell in it.

II. Consider the infallible assurance we have of obtaining it.

I. The excellencies of this place may be argued from the Maker of it, and its attributes specified in scripture. * First, God is to be the artificial builder of this city, to signify a correspondent excellency in the work to the divine Maker. All the works of God have a divine impression of his power and providence, but in some are more conspicuous characters of his perfections: for the wise Author of all things, hath ordered their several degrees of excellence, both in the matter, and various art of adorning them, suitable to the end for which they were designed. Now the supreme heaven was made to be the temple of the divine majesty, wherein he would diffuse the richest beams of his goodness and glory to his chosen servants for ever, and accordingly is a most noble work of his omnipotent hand; and

* Τεχνίτης. Heb. 11. 10.

there are two remarks to be made in its creation, from whence we may infer its peculiar excellency.

1st. It is the beginning of the creation. Amongst intellectual beings, the angels are the firstborn of God's power; and in natural and divine prerogatives excel men. From hence it is that the excellency of any praiseworthy quality in men, is set forth by a resemblance of the angels. Excellent wisdom in David, "My Lord, the King, is like an angel of God." Excellent eloquence by St. Paul, is styled "the tongues of angels." Heroic virtue, and excellent holiness in the christian church, "The house of David shall be as the angel of the Lord;" for that which is highest in any kind of perfection, is the rule and measure of the degrees of that perfection. And thus in forming the material world, the supreme heaven hath the precedence in order and dignity, before all the other parts of it. Indeed Moses only recites particularly the creation of the visible world; and by what gradations this great fabric with all its furniture was completed: and the history of that is instructive of the creation of invisible things, which is expressly specified in the gospel. But, as paradise was first made, and then man created to be the inhabitant of it; so we may infer, that the highest heaven, the seat of the angels, was made before they were created. Now the angels (we are informed by divine revelation) were present when the "foundations of the earth were laid, and God stretched his line upon it: then the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." Job 38. 4, 5, 7. They saw the rising world, the variety and beauty of its frame, the admirable order that distinguishes and unites its parts, that all things were divinely done, and transported with wonder and joy celebrated the praises of the Creator.

2ndly. The supreme heaven is the effect of God's immediate creation. The earth with all its ornaments was formed of pre-existent matter: the chaos, a confused mass, was the embryo of the sublunary world: but the supreme heaven is his more immediate and exquisite workmanship, and received its being and perfection at once. You may illustrate this by the account that is given by Moses of the creation of man; "God made man of the dust of the ground." Gen. 2. 7. His body derives its birth from the low element; and the wisdom of the Creator is wonderful in the artificial structure of it: it is added, "God breathed

into his nostrils the breath of life;" and "man became a living soul." The earth enters into the composition of his body, but his soul was inspired by the breath of God; that is, by his divine power immediately created; and in nobility of nature, and its spiritual endowments, incomparably excels the body. And the third heaven, though not a spiritual substance, yet in the purity of its nature, far transcends whatever was formed of gross matter.

This being premised, I will now consider what the scripture reveals to us of that place that is eminently the house of God.

1. The amplitude of it. Our Saviour tells us, "the way is narrow, and the gate strait that leads to it," to excite our diligence; but there "are many mansions" in the celestial palace to encourage our hopes. It is therefore called "a city, a kingdom." If we look up to the shining sky, wherein are the sun, that by the computation of late * astronomers, some thousands of times exceeds the earth in its magnitude; and innumerable stars, and some of that greatness, that they eighty times exceed this globe of earth; though to the ignorant, and therefore incredulous, they are judged to be as they appear, (upon the account of that unmeasurable distance between the firmament and us) but glistering points of light: our minds will be tired and lost in taking measures of that that seemeth boundless: and this vast expansion, with all the glorious luminaries, is but the portal of the house of God. Therefore Solomon, setting forth the boundless greatness of God, saith, "Behold the heaven, and the heaven of heavens cannot contain him;" that is, neither the airy nor ethereal heaven, nor the supreme heaven that encompasses and exceeds it. It is a spacious palace, becoming the divine Maker's greatness, the image of his immensity: and the state of felicity there is answerable. The blessed God, in whom there is an eternal union of all perfections, "is all in all to his people." The sun in its brightness may be as truly included in a spark, as the divine excellencies be measured by created contemplation. There is an infinite variety in the Supreme Good, that makes it always rare and new in the fruition. The universal love, and universal fulness of the Deity, exceedingly satisfies

* Mr. Boyle, on the high Veneration Man's Intellect owes to God, &c. p. 11.

all the desires, and perpetuates the delights of the saints. He styles himself, in the gracious covenant with his people, "I am God all-sufficient; walk before me, and be perfect." He is sufficient in all things that are requisite, to the complete felicity of the most comprehensive spirits; and is sufficient to make all that innumerable company of angels and saints, as happy as one person. "God is light," and emanations of his goodness are sensibly represented by it. Heaven is called, "the inheritance of the saints in light." As the sun (his almoner) diffuses its light and heat so generally, that every one indifferently enjoys it without prejudice to others. As the sun streams forth in rays every moment, yet (which is a perpetual miracle in nature) without the least diminution of his lustre and efficacy: thus the Sun of Righteousness dispenses his influences of knowledge, and love, and joy, to all the blessed assembly above, and is the universal happiness of all, and the entire happiness of every saint. * God is an inexhaustible fountain of felicity: as he that drinks of a living spring, (though inflamed with thirst) yet leaves it flowing and full as before, sufficient to refresh a thousand men without being dry: thus God is able to make many worlds happy. An earthly inheritance is either entirely and peculiarly the first-born's, or is lessened by division: but all "the sons of God" have the dignity of "the firstborn," and "are heirs of God." Heb. 12. Rom. 8. and enjoy an undivided inheritance. Our heavenly Father verifies to every saint, what the father in the parable said to his son, "All that I have is thine."

2. The stability and firmness of it. The apostle saith, "It is a city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." Cities that are raised by the greatest kings who are corruptible, and mortal, are so slightly built, that they may be consumed by fire, battered by storms, and without external violence, yet from an inward principle of decay, sink into ruins: but heaven is the "city of the living God," the seat of his eternal empire. This present world is like a tent pitched for a time, whilst the church is sojourning in the wilderness: Psal. 102. the most solid parts of it, the visible heaven, and earth, shall perish, either by an entire consumption, or their ruin shall terminate in a renovation to a better state. 2 Pet. 3. But the third heaven is

* Quantumlibet capacem ventrem afferat. Fons vincit sitientem. *Aug.*

above the dominion of the elements, exempted from all changes, and for ever remains. It is "an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and fades not away:" the integrity, purity, and glory of it are always the same. It is the habitation of God's throne. He "sits in heaven" Psal. 2. secure from all the tumultuous conspiracies of his enemies, and derides their impious attempts, against his Son, and church. His throne is unshaken there, notwithstanding things below are turned about in a vertiginous circle. And as the house, so the inhabitants, and their felicity, are eternal. "Glory, honour, and immortality, are the reward of all that patiently continue in well-doing." Rom. 2. Our Saviour assures his disciples, "Because I live, ye shall live also. He tasted death for them, and swallowed it up in victory." He declared in vision to St. John, "Behold, I am alive for evermore." Rev. 1. The Lord of life will uphold the saints in that blessed state for ever: they shall never fall out of the arms and bosom of a gracious God. He will never withdraw his love, and they shall never forfeit it: for sin is from the perverseness of the will, and disorder of the affections, joined with some error of the mind. But in the light of glory, and full enjoyment of God, the understanding is so perfectly illuminated, the will and the affections so exceedingly satisfied, that it is impossible they should apprehend erroneously, or desire irregularly.

This glorious advantage the redeemed saints have (by Jesus Christ who "obtained eternal redemption for them," Heb. 9. 12.) above the grace given to angels and man in the first creation. The angels were upon trial of their obedience, not in a determined state of felicity. Their first declination of love and subjection, was a downfal from their blessed habitation. Woful change! how unlike themselves in their original purity, and glory? An unparalleled example of the frailty of the creature that forsakes God, and of the divine severity. Man did but stand in paradise for a little while, and had a ruinous fall with all his progeny. But the glorified "saints actually sit with Christ in heavenly places," and enjoy an unchangeable happy state. The felicity above is permanent, as the everlasting object that produces and preserves it, and the everlasting soul wherein it dwells. Blessed security! how triumphantly do the glorified in heaven sing, "This God is our God for ever and ever." Earthly relations, how near soever, determine in death;

and the sorrow of losing them, is in proportion to the delightful enjoying them. But the heavenly relation between God and the saints, is as everlasting, as the object on which it is fixed: this God in whom are all amiable excellencies, all sweetness and beauty to feed desires and delights, is our God in strict propriety, in the dearest and most reviving fruition for ever. Their happiness is crowned with eternity. This is so real an accession to their felicity, that without the entire assurance of it, the state of blessedness were incomplete; the least jealousy of losing it, would disturb their peaceful fruition, and joyful tranquillity in heaven: for as hope in misery allays sorrow, so fear in happiness lessens joy. The apprehension of losing such a kingdom, would cause torment. But, as in the contrary state, reprobate sinners that are in hell, under an utter impossibility of deliverance, are racked and tortured by absolute despair: so the blessed above, that enjoy the beatific vision, by the infallible assurance of its perpetuity, are filled with a joy unspeakable and glorious.

3. The sanctity of this blessed house. It is separate from the rest of the world in its sublime situation, and its unparalleled excellencies. Sanctity of place is relative, and is founded, either upon the manifestation of God's special presence, or consecration of it to his service. It is consistent with the divine immensity, to be differently present in several places: as the soul is in another manner present in the head, where it performs its noblest operations, than in other parts of the body; and upon any special appearance of God, a place is sacred. Thus when Moses approached to see the flaming bush, he was enjoined, "Do not come near hither; pluck off thy shoes from off thy feet, the place where thou standest is holy ground." Exod. 3. 5. The visible testimony of the divine presence sanctified the place, and the most humble outward reverence was due, a sign and effect of the internal respect that is owing to his most adorable majesty. The sanctity of that place, was an extraordinary relation, and ceased upon the vanishing of the flame, the sign of God's presence. There is also a relative sanctity, by the consecration of time or place for holy uses. Thus the seventh day, upon the finishing the creation, was hallowed by God himself, set apart as the firstfruits of days for his service, and applied to divine worship, that man might entirely exercise his

mind in admiring and praising the Creator, whose glory was visible in his works. And in both these respects, the temple of Jerusalem was holy, as being appropriated to God's service by his own election and appointment; and being the place wherein he exhibited his presence in a special manner. Solomon expresseth this as the end of building the temple, in his letter to the king of Tyre, desiring his assistance; "Behold, I build an house to the name of the Lord my God, to dedicate it to him, and to burn before him sweet incense, and for the continual shewbread, and for the burnt-offerings morning and evening, on the sabbaths, and on the new moons, and on the solemn feasts of the Lord our God." 2 Chr. 2. 4. And we read, at the dedication of Solomon's temple, that a sudden thick cloud obscured the air, a sign of God's descending and acceptance, whose invisible majesty was veiled under it: and whether from that sacred darkness, or fear at the unexpected miracle, the priests could not minister because of the cloud. 2 Chr. 5. 13, 14. The sacrifices, music, and all the temple-service were interrupted. But the temple built with hands, and all its pompous service, were but an imperfect mutable shadow of the "holy temple" above, Psal. 11. 4. where God exhibits his sacred presence, not in a dark vapour, but in the richest beams of glory, and wherein that most pure Spirit is worshipped in spirit and truth for ever. The saints are "a royal priesthood to God," in a state of eminency, and separation from the rest of the world: they now offer up the sacrifice of praise, and the sacred incense of prayer, infinitely more pleasing to God than all the sacrifice of beasts, and the most precious gums, and aromatic spices, that with their sweet smoke perfumed the temple. But "in the holy of holies above," (where no defiled thing can enter) they perform divine service in a divine manner. The perfect rest in heaven, is "a sabbath's rest," Heb. 4. wherein our fervent affections, the springs of activity, are in their powerful exercise upon God. Here our faint earth clogs our ascending affections; and such is the tender indulgence of our heavenly Father, that "when the spirit is willing, though the flesh be weak," he pardons and accepts us. But there our bodies become spiritual, qualified for the exercises of heaven, and all our powers are in a holy heat and rapture, admiring and praising the blessed God. Here the saints often retire from the world, to worship the divine majesty

in their closets; and the secrecy of the duty, is an argument of the sincerity. They with more freedom pour forth their souls into his bosom, and he insinuates the gracious acceptance of their requests: but the noblest elevation of the affections, is in communion with all the saints and angels above. The ardent seraphims were inflamed, crying one to another, "holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory." Isa. 6. 3. Here there must be some interval between the solemn acts of worship, the circumstances of the present state require it; but in the heavenly sanctuary, it is their continual work and delight to celebrate the high praises of God: "they are before his throne, and serve him day and night in his temple." The inhabitants of "Arabia the happy," burn, for their common uses, those aromatic trees, that produce myrrh and precious balm, of which the sacred incense was compounded: and it is no wonder, because those trees grow common in their country, that is open to the most favourable aspects of the heavens, and the strongest heat of the sun: but to our countries, how little of those rich perfumes are brought. And such is the comparison between the praises of the angels and the glorified saints, and ours here below. They are always in the noblest work, excited by the highest motives. They are always under the direct beams of God's favour, which are vigorously reflected in their praises. All their felicity is, to contemplate his excellent perfections, all their pleasure to love him, all their glory to obey him. Their affectionate praises are renewed without intermission, because the divine favours are renewed every moment. There is a perpetual circulation of graces from the blessed Creator, and thanksgivings from the happy creature. All their joyful affections, and their solemn thoughts and reflections are terminated in that great and glorious object. The prophet declares their holy employment; "They continually speak of the glorious honour of his majesty, and of his wondrous works: they speak of the might of his terrible acts; and they declare his goodness, and sing of his righteousness. The Lord is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy. The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works. All thy works praise thee, O Lord, and thy saints bless thee. They speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power. Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom; and thy do-

minion endures through all generations." They never cease to love, and admire, and therefore never cease to praise him. Their hearts are eternally inflamed, and their mouths eternally opened to glorify him. But with the highest veneration they adore his mercy; that perfection that is the special glory and the dearest delight of God; that which is the supreme of all the glorious attributes in redemption, that will be the principal argument of their praises. "They sing the mercies of the Lord for ever;" that mercy that chose them from everlasting; that mercy that in such an admirable manner conducted them through the world, that never left them, but most wisely ordered all things below in relation to their future happiness; that mercy that crowns them with life and immortality, when the reprobate world feel the most terrible effects of revenging justice. We read of the Jews after their captivity, upon their finishing the temple, that with a transport of joy, they cried, "Grace! Grace!" when God, who is the author of our salvation, shall have finished it, with what a sweet consent shall we celebrate his sacred praises! Mercy upon mercy, all is mercy. Happy exercise! Heaven is a state of joy and thankfulness. "Blessed are those that are in thy house, they always praise thee."

4. The delightfulness of this place. It is called paradise by our Saviour. He promises the penitent thief, the companion of his cross, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." Paradise was a garden planted by immortal hands, to be the habitation of Adam in his state of original righteousness, when the favourite of heaven: it was the beauty and delight, the flower of the world, and with abundance, and variety, exceedingly satisfied all the desires of life, it was watered with four rivers, to make it always pleasant and fruitful. But the celestial paradise as much excels it in beauty and pleasantness, as in its sublime situation: and the joyful satisfaction of the soul in communion with God, and the blessed society there, infinitely excels all the innocent delights of the natural life. Heaven is a state of pure, full, and unfading joy. The joy of the blessed is not mixed with things that may corrupt its excellence. There is an absolute exemption from all evils. "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes: and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain." The joy is full; it is called "our master's joy." Great

God, how ineffable is that joy! It is the richest reward infinite bounty can give to faithful servants. As "being made like to Christ in glory," 1 John 3. 2. implies a divine and full perfection: so the "entering into his joy," implies the most accomplished and incomprehensible felicity. It is a permanent joy that none shall take from the blessed, as our Saviour promises his disciples. Here below, suppose a person encompassed with all the good things of the world, yet this felicity is neither without defects, nor without dependance upon casual things, that he is never completely happy, but only less miserable: and though he lives long in prosperity, and hath a tenour of health to enjoy it; yet, as the clearest evening is presently followed by night, so the most vigorous old age is certainly attended with death, that extinguishes all sensual pleasures. But in the "presence of God is fulness of joy; at his right hand are pleasures for ever."

To explain this more particularly, let us consider, that knowledge, love, and joy, are the perfections and felicity of immortal spirits, and are correspondent to the excellency of the objects upon which they are fixed, and the capacity of the faculties that are exercised, and the degrees of satisfaction communicated to them. Now in heaven, our noblest faculties, the understanding and will, are raised and enlarged, and entirely united to the best objects. What conception can we frame of joy for an intellectual creature, so full and satisfying, as the clear vision of God invested with all his attractive attributes, his glorious perfections, and in perfect loving the most lovely object, and being perfectly loved by him? When the soul freed from this mortal muddy flesh, and the mind cleared from all terrene images, conveyed by the channels of the senses, sees "God face to face;" how is it ravished with wonder and love in the sight of his most amiable excellencies? How pure a joy is infused to the centre of the soul, and fills all its desires? How permanent, like the everlasting spring from whence it flows? The psalmist inspired with the love of God, breaks forth in an holy ecstacy; "How blessed is that man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts? We shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple." Psal. 6. 5, 4. Admirable blessedness! dear felicity! The same heavenly saint expresses his esteem and affection; "How excellent

is thy lovingkindness, O Lord! They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house: and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasure." Psal. 36. 8. Here we "do but taste and see how good the Lord is;" and that is so powerful a cordial, as gloriously supports the saints under the heaviest sufferings. But heaven is the element of joy. Here a glancing sight of his goodness, how reviving is it? A living vein of light, from his favourable countenance, Acts 16. 24, 25. pierced into the miserable dungeon where Paul and Silas were chained, and raised their spirits to that heavenly pitch, that they sang "Praises to God:" the illustrious reflection of paradise, "lightened them at midnight," and put a gloss of joy upon them. But in heaven, those most divine and amiable titles, that "God is light, and that God is love," are most fully exhibited, and experimentally understood by the saints. "They see him as he is," in his essential glory; and all the secret treasures of his wisdom, in his works of wonder are unfolded, and the sweetest manifestations of his love are given to them. That which the prophet declares of God's tender affections to his church, is verified in the most excellent manner in heaven; "The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty: he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy: he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing." Zeph. 3. 17. That the blessed God is well pleased in the glorified saints, is the supreme degree of their felicity. How joyful a complacency arises from the communion with the blessed Redeemer, and the saints in heaven? Love is the first fountain of joy; and the more intense, the more ravishing is the fruition. The love of Christ to them was so great, that from eternity he was infinitely pleased in the thoughts of their salvation; "His delights were with the sons of men," Prov. 8. 31. before they delighted in him. If the design of that blessed work was so pleasing, what is the accomplishment? The evangelical prophet declares, "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied." Isa. 53. 11. And the love of the saints to Christ, is a correspondent affection, according to their utmost capacity. All the affections that were scattered here below, * are concentred in him, for he infinitely deserves their

* Omnia suspiria in Christo anhelant. Ille unus pulcherrimus qui fœdos illustet, ut pulchros faceret, desideretur.

love, having ransomed them with the dearest price, and purchased for them an everlasting inheritance. He loved them in their foul deformity, that he might superinduce a divine beauty upon them, and prepare them for the enjoyment of himself. He is now their desire, and in heaven where he appears in all his brightness and beauty, their everlasting delight. We may conceive a little of their ravishing communion, by the language of divine love, between Christ and the church, in the "Song of Solomon," and their harmonious affections expressed in the most endearing manner; "Open to me my love, my dove, my undefiled:" and the inflamed spouse, in a high and delightful rapture, breaks forth; "I am my beloved's, and he is mine." If a propriety and interest in him, be productive of such a pure joy, what will the everlasting fruition be? The scripture represents it by a marriage-feast, as the most complete resemblance of that spiritual joy. Thus the inhabitants of heaven are introduced, speaking; "Give honour to him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready." Rev. 19. 7. What union! what joy! How will the saints rejoice in God their Saviour, in the view of the surprising wonders of his love? The scripture speaks of another accession to the joys of heaven, the innumerable company of angels and saints that live in perfect concord, inviolable love, the sweetest content, and joyful complacency. Society is a principal ingredient of joy. What exultation of joy will there be, when the whole family of heaven shall meet together in their Father's house? We may conjecture how the angels are affected to us, by what is recorded concerning their appearance at the birth of our Saviour; "There was a multitude of the heavenly host praising God; saying, glory be to God on high, on earth peace, good-will towards men." It is the first time since the fall of man, that we hear of the angels' song: they were commissioned to punish rebellious sinners, and appeared with flaming swords, the instruments of revenging wrath. But when the Lord of Hosts became the God of peace, they appeared with harps in their hands, with praise and joy, celebrating his mercy. They foresaw that peace on earth would end in the glory of heaven; and the ruins of their celestial country, would be repaired by our salvation. And the glorified saints are all companions in the same joy, and the same

blessedness. For never was there such a transforming of one lover into another here, as there is of the saints in heaven: they are all animated by the same Divine Spirit; their thoughts and inclinations are the same, and have the highest satisfaction in the felicity of one another. Behold, how good, and how pleasant is it for brethren to dwell in unity! Briefly, we find that sensible joy is in its elevation in the times of the harvest and vintage, and after victory; when the blessings of God, the precious fruits of the earth, the hopes of our labours, and the support and comfort of the present life are received, an universal joy fills the country. Now "Light is sown for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart. It is sown in tears, but reaped with exultation." We gather the fruits of blessedness from thorns, poverty, and mourning, hunger, and thirst, and persecution: and this gives the more lively tincture to our joy. The joy of victory is transporting, and that always in proportion to the danger and power of the enemies subdued, and the rich spoils taken from them. Now when our spiritual enemies, so numerous, so powerful and irreconcileable to our souls, sin, satan, death, are utterly broken, * how triumphant a joy follows? The historian relating that most glorious triumph at Rome, when Pyrrhus, their proud and potent enemy was expelled from Italy, observes, that of all the show, no part was more joyful, than to see the elephants that had been so terrible, and carried towers on their backs, to be subdued and led in triumph. Thus how joyful is it to see the prince of darkness, with all his infernal legions, not without the tormenting sense of their captivity, bruised under our feet! to see the human nature of Christ raised to the highest honour to which that rebellious spirit did proudly aspire. O how delightful a spectacle! All the saints will cast their crowns before the throne, and sing the praises of their victorious deliverer.

5. The glory of this place is discovered in the scripture. The "Father of Christ is the God of glory, and the Father of glory;" and heaven is his lofty and glorious throne, becoming his excellent majesty and universal dominion. "The Lord hath pre-

* Sed nihil libentius Populus Romanus aspexit, quam illas quas timuerat cum turribus suis bestias, quæ non sine sensu captivitatis submissis cervicibus victores equos sequebantur. *Flor. lib.* 1. *c.* 18.

pared his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom ruleth over all." Glory in its first notion signifies the brightness and lustre of light, and from thence metaphorically imports excellency in any kind. Thus the divine perfections are expressed, God "is glorious in holiness, glorious in power:" and the joy of believers is called "unspeakable and glorious." Heaven is set forth as glorious in a transcendent manner; it is called, the "Excellent glory;" from whence a voice came to the apostles in that holy mount, declaring Christ to be the Son of God: so it is called, "The richly glorious inheritance; the inheritance of the saints in light." When the sun rises in its brightness, a deluge of gold overflows the world, and adorns the universe: but this is but a shadow of the inherent glory of the highest heaven. It was prepared by God "for the house of his kingdom, and the glory of his majesty." We read of the vast preparations made by two great kings for the building the temple at Jerusalem: such sums of gold and silver, that would empty all the treasuries of the princes of the world; that were it not recorded in sacred scripture, it would exceed belief. The number of the workmen were seventy thousand, employed seven years without intermission; the materials were very rich and splendid, gold, and cedar, and precious stones: and the excellency of the architecture was such, that no human art can equal: for it was modelled by the divine mind; and the delineation of its parts was sent to David by an angel. But what are the preparations of earthly kings, to the preparation of God? And what is the glory of the temple made with hands, to that admirable fabric that received its being and perfection immediately from God? We read of the New Jerusalem, the type of heaven, "that the foundations were precious stones, the gates were entire pearls, the streets pure gold, as it were transparent glass." The expressions are in condescendance to our capacities, and but a faint resemblance of the glory of Jerusalem above. In the vision of the prophet Isaiah, the seraphims cried to one another, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts, the whole earth is full of thy glory." It is a theatre of wonders divinely decked, * and the wise discerning observer, admires and praises God's power and providence so clearly ma-

* Obstupescit obruiturq; miraculis. *Aug.*

nifested in it: for the excellency of the work is answerable to the art of the Maker; and the glory of the Maker results from the excellence of the work. But what the apostle saith, in comparing the legal and evangelical dispensation, "That if that which was done away, was glorious, much more that which remains is glorious;" and in that degree of eminence as to obscure the other, may justly be applied to the glory of God appearing in the earth, and the third heaven: for if the earth, the lowest stage of the world, the habitation of brute creatures, and to be continued only for a time, hath so much glory in it, what an excellent glory is in the supreme heavens, the native habitation of the angels, and that is to continue for ever? The earth since man's rebellion, doth not remain in its primitive state, but hath lost much of its beauty and usefulness. At first it was entirely suitable to the rich goodness of the Creator; now terrible mixtures of his justice appear in all the parts of it: barrenness in the earth, thorns and thistles, the fruits of the curse for sin; malignant influences, and storms in the air, tempests in the sea, inundations of water; and how many diseases are fatally natural to our bodies? But the highest heaven remains in its original beauty, and pure integrity. The earth is now the habitation of his enemies, where they oppress his faithful servants by their bold injuries: but heaven is the habitation of his saints. In short, it is a place becoming the majesty and magnificence of God, and his love to his chosen friends. It is said of the patriarchs, whose desires and hopes were not centred in that earthly Canaan,-though flowing with milk and honey; but "they desired a better country," that is, "a heavenly; wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he hath prepared for them a city." To be styled our God, is a title of the richest value, and implies, that all the perfections of the Deity are to make us happy. It had been a reflection upon his greatness and goodness, if he had only given to the patriarchs a portion in this world. But heaven is a place and state of felicity becoming his infinite majesty, his special love, and eternal duration. It is an observation of Tertullian, * that God who made other

* Totum Deum occupatum, & deditum manu, opere, consilio sapientia. Amor dictabat lineamenta.

things by command, by the omnipotent umpire of his will, applied himself with counsel to form the body of Adam, which was the original model of all perfections that a human body is capable of, for the beauty of aspect without, and the artificial order of the parts within; and the reason was, love drew the lineaments. Thus love, the queen of the divine attributes, employed infinite wisdom, and almighty power, to build this celestial city for the reception of his chosen favourites. The King of glory dwells there in a special manner. "The heaven, even the heavens are the Lord's; but the earth hath he given to the children of men." By right and dominion, "the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof;" and the possession of it is from his bounty to men; but heaven is reserved for himself, the place of his glorious residence. As a prince that hath many houses, gives some for to be inhabited by his servants, but the imperial palace is kept for his own dwelling; God manifests himself there in the most refulgent manner. All the perfections of the glorious Deity are revealed to the saints in their purity and radiancy. The divine presence is the supreme glory of heaven. The Lord Jesus Christ is there crowned with the majesty of the divine empire. This glory is the reward of his meritorious obedience and sufferings. He was made a subject and a servant, and endured the most ignominious cruel death to satisfy God's injured justice. What hath not the Son done for the glory of his Father? He lost his life rather than his obedience: and what will not the Father do for the honour of his Son? What recompence is correspondent to such astonishing humiliation? Our Saviour in his last solemn prayer with his disciples, addresses himself to God: "I have glorified thee on earth; I have finished the work thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify me with thyself, with the glory I had with thee before the world was." John 17. 4, 5. The Father was so highly honoured by Christ, that to satisfy his infinite love towards him, he hath dignified him with a name and state, that transcends all created glory. He is the Lord of angels, the head of the church, and sits at the right hand of the Majesty on high. In heaven he appears in his triumphant glory, of which in the transfiguration there was a transient glimpse, when his face did shine as the sun, but allayed and moderated, that his disciples might sustain his presence. There the angels, the princes of the ce-

lestial court, in all their bright orders encompass the throne of God, and pay their humblest homage to him. The saints appear there in their robes of glory, for they are transformed into the glorious likeness of the Son of God: their souls radiant with pure unspotted holiness, shine through their bodies, as sunbeams transmitted through crystal. They all reign in sovereign state for ever. It becomes the divine majesty, that all God's subjects should be kings; and the highest principality on earth, is but servitude compared with the royalty enjoyed by the saints above: for often are the mightiest monarchs on earth in perfect bondage to their lawless passions, and the soul in dull captivity to the sensual appetites. How often are the strongest empires dissolved and ruined? But the saints in heaven, by obeying God, reign triumphantly: no passions, no fears, no desires, resist their will; nothing is able to trouble the sincere delight, the perfect tranquillity of their state. They in their several degrees of glory, shine like the stars for ever and ever.

To sum up all; what is promised to the church, is fulfilled in heaven; "The sun shall be no more thy light by day, nor the moon by night; but the Lord shall be thy everlasting light, and thy God thy glory." Isa. 60. 19.

Thus I have endeavoured to represent that luminous palace, and the bright inhabitants: but how short is the description of the glorious realities, all human words are too weak and narrow to express it as it is. The glory and joy of that blessed state are unspeakable, as the apostle, a spectator thereof, certifies. And it is observable that our Saviour himself expresses the greatest things, by low familiar terms and resemblances; as he tells his faithful disciples, they shall eat and drink at his table in his kingdom. In his promises of rewards, it was not his intention merely to make a show of his power, but to declare his love: like a God, he doth not magnify the favours he will bestow, but leaves it to their spirits to conceive what becomes almighty goodness to bestow on his servants. In the plainest manner of promising the reward, there is a clear character of the excellent greatness of the giver and his gifts.

II. I will now consider the infallible assurance we have of this blessed place and state. This is built on our Saviour's love to them, and his truth; and his going to prepare that blessedness for them. He saith to his disciples, "Otherwise I would have

told you;" implying, that his affection and sincerity, make it impossible that he should deceive them with an empty promise of future happiness.

1. His *love* secures them. He would never have chosen them to be the companions of his cross, never have exposed them as sheep among wolves, to suffer for his sake, and to leave them for ever, and reign alone in heaven. Love is a benevolent affection rising in the breast, and expressing itself in real benefits, according to the power of the lover, and the wants or the capacity of the person beloved: and the more intense the affection is, the more evident and noble effects of kindness will proceed from it. All the most liberal expressions, without real performance, are but a vain pageant of friendship. Now, the love of our Saviour to his disciples, was not only sincere, but in such a degree of eminence, that they might safely rely upon his promises. His pure love, was the motive of selecting them from the world, and dignifying them with the endearing title of his friends. His conversation with them was infinitely sweet, a miracle of benignity: and that glorious performance of his love for them, and all believers, in leaving heaven for their sakes, is the strongest assurance that he will bring them to his Father's house above. It is represented as the peculiar glory of Theodosius, that he seated majesty and love in the same throne: * for love unites and conforms persons, and makes them, as it were, peers: and it seems too low a submission for a sovereign to descend from his throne to a kind of equality with a subject, or too high an exaltation to assume a private person into such a degree of affection, as to make him as himself; yet such was the condescension of that great and amiable emperor. But how distant is the greatest monarch in the world from the eternal Son of God, the Prince of the kings of the earth? Love brought him down from his throne in heaven, where he was adored by the angels, and united him to our nature in our lowly state, in order to the raising us to his kingdom, and uniting us to himself in glory. Love invaluable and incomparable! If Solomon, upon God's descending in a cloud to take possession of the temple, was surprised with heavenly astonishment; "But

* Amicitiæ nomen privatum non solum intra aulam vocasti, sed indutam auro, gemmisq; redimitam vollo recepisti. *Lat. paneg. ad Theod.*

will God indeed dwell on earth?" with infinite more cause have we, considering the incarnation of the Son of God, to say, "Will God indeed dwell on earth?" For what was the appearance of a vapour, that might be easily dispelled, to the coming of Jesus Christ into the world, in whom the fulness of the Godhead dwelt substantially? What is so worthy of reverence and admiration? New things suspend the actings of the mind, glorious things overwhelm the faculty; and never was there so rare and excelling an object. This so signal and amazing effect of our Saviour's love, gives assurance to christians, that he will take them to an everlasting communion with himself in glory. As it is more for a prince to live with a private person in a cottage with complacency, than to receive that person into his court, and invest him with honour. The love of our Saviour never abated to his disciples; when he was in view of death, with its troops of terrors, it is said, "having loved his own, he loved them to the end." And after his resurrection to a heavenly life, he expressed the same dear affection, "Go to my brethren:" a style as high as love can rise.

It is further considerable what was touched on before, that the disciples of Christ, besides the common calamities of mankind wherein they are involved, are for his truth and cause exposed to indignities and injuries of all kinds and degrees, which the malice of satan and his instruments, the perverted world, can fasten upon them. The complaint of the church of old is often renewed, "For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." And can the love of Christ, so tender, so compassionate, that the love of a mother to a sucking infant is not an adequate representation of it; can such love let the saints be separated from him for ever? Then, according to the apostle's expression, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable."

2. His truth gives an infallible assurance that we shall be received with him in glory. He declares his own titles, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." If truth itself be true, and deserves our entire trust, we may rest upon his promises, who values his word more than the world. The pillars of heaven shall fall, and the foundations of the earth be overthrown, before one tittle of his words shall be without a full accomplishment.

Matt. 5. "If any man serves me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall my servant be." John 12. 26. It is his most gracious promise to encourage obedience: and he assures his disciples, "If I go away, and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." To show the validity of Christ's promise, let us consider, the unchangeable perfections of God's nature are the foundation of his unchangeable councils; and from thence the unchangeableness of his promises is justly inferred. The decrees of God are engraven with the point of a diamond, and are unretractable. "The counsel of the Lord shall stand:" for such is the perfection of his knowledge, that he can never be surprised by any sudden unforeseen event that should induce a change of his will; and such is his omnipotence, that he gives an infallible accomplishment to his decrees: "and his word endures for ever." 1 Pet. 1. 25. The immutability of his nature, gives firmness to his counsels; and the fidelity of his nature to his promises. "In him there is no variableness, nor shadow of change: and he is a God that cannot lie:" he reveals himself by his name Jehovah to his people, to signify, that he is the same in performing, as in promising. Now Jesus Christ his Son is equal to the Father in all essential perfections. He styles himself "the Amen, the true and faithful witness:" if he deceive his servants with a false expectation of a joyful glorious state hereafter, it would be a blemish to his unspotted holiness, an eternal reflection upon his inviolate truth. It is therefore a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that where Christ is in glory, there shall his servants be with him, otherwise "he would have told them."

3. We are to consider the other firm ground of assurance in our Saviour's next words: "I go to prepare a place for you." This specially respects his ascension into heaven, but it supposes his death. He purchased heaven by his death: he prepares it by his ascension. His blood shed on the cross, and pleaded in heaven, gives to believers a right to it here, and actual possession hereafter.

(1.) His obedient sufferings are the price of this glorious inheritance. In our guilty state, heaven is as inaccessible to us, as paradise was to Adam after his expulsion, when guarded by a cherubim with a flaming sword. For neither the divine wis-

dom, nor the law of God would permit that an unpardoned sinner should be received into his kingdom. The justice of God doth not infringe his rich goodness, but that he may bestow upon an innocent creature the most excellent blessings, the testimonies of his bounty. If Adam had persevered in his duty, God might have translated him to heaven, and that happy change had been a free favour: for his obedience had not been comparable to the glory that shall be revealed in the saints. But justice sets up a legal bar against the guilty; they are excluded from the heavenly glory. The creature must be entirely innocent, or graciously pardoned, to be capable of enjoying that supreme happiness. When the guilt of sin is abolished, it hath no malignant power, either to subject us to evil, or deprive us of good. Now our Saviour by satisfying the injured justice of God, hath washed away our sins in his blood; and hath infinitely pleased God, that we obtain by him, not only redemption from hell, but the possession of heaven. This was the design of God's love, in giving his "only begotten Son, that whoever believes should not perish, but have everlasting life." Heb. 9. 12. Accordingly the apostle saith, "That being justified by his grace through Jesus Christ, we should be made heirs of eternal life." Titus 3. 7. And by the gracious unalterable tenour of the gospel, these great benefits are inseparable; it being equally impossible that an unpardoned sinner should enter into heaven, or that a pardoned sinner should be excluded. The connexion is indissolvable; "whom he justifies, them he glorifies." Rom. 8. 30. Nay, it is more easily credible, that a pardoned sinner should be admitted into the glorious presence of God, than that a guilty sinner should be reconciled to him. As supposing the revival of a phœnix from its ashes, it is more easily conceivable that it should take its flight upwards, which is the natural motion of a living bird, than that it should be restored to life in such a miraculous manner. In short, heaven is a free gift to us, but dearly bought by our Saviour; it is "the gift of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." He had a double title to heaven, as the Son of God, he was heir of his kingdom; this title is incommunicably his own: and he acquired it by his meritorious sufferings: this he imparts to believers, "who enter into heaven by the new and living way, which he consecrated for them through his flesh."

(2.) He ascended into heaven to prepare a place for us. The actions of our Saviour may be considered two ways; either as terminated in himself, or with a relative respect to believers, as the head of the church. His resurrection was merely personal, but hath an operative force in raising all the members of his mystical body: as David's subduing Goliah, was not his own personal victory simply, but was extended in its happy consequences to all his nation: for in him, as their champion, the army of Israel overcame the Philistines. Jesus Christ, as head of the church, hath broken the dominion of death; and by virtue of his conquest, the grave shall restore the saints at the general resurrection. And his ascension was not a personal act purely to obtain his own right; but as our forerunner he is entered for us into heaven. As the highpriest in his majestic mysterious habit, with the names of the children of Israel upon his breast, entered into the holy of holies; so Jesus Christ entered into the eternal sanctuary as our representative, to take possession of it for us. The language of despair is silenced for ever, "Who shall ascend up to heaven to raise us thither?" Christ is lifted up to the highest glory, and will draw all his people after him. The first Adam was from the earth, earthly; but Christ is the Lord from heaven, and is returned to heaven: and shall earth destroy what heaven cannot restore? The apostle tells us, that "believers sit with Christ in heavenly places;" that is, as he is the head of that sacred society, his church; and his promise is expressed, "To him that overcomes, will I grant personally to sit with me in my throne, even as I also am set down with my Father in his throne." After victorious obedience, the saints shall be taken into sovereign alliance with Christ, and reign for ever. In short, his excellent merit is the foundation of our glorious hope: and his prevailing intercession introduces us into actual possession. He that purchased heaven, disposes of it by his last will; thus he addressed to his Father immediately before his death; "Father, I will that those whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may see my glory." And he has power to accomplish his own testament. What he hath done already for believers is an uncontrollable evidence, and invincible assurance of what he hath promised. There is a vaster distance between the Deity and misery, than between man and the heavenly glory. For the sun to go back-

wards ten degrees, was miraculous and astonishing; but to ascend the horizon, is according to natural order. The abasement of the Son of God was stupendous, but his advancement to the highest glory is most becoming his divine relation, and infinitely due to his exuberant merits, and a firm foundation of hope, that all his redeemed saints "shall be where he is," and be conformed to him in all supernatural divine excellencies of soul and body for ever.

THE APPLICATION.

1. Let us adore the inconceivable love of God, who hath prepared such a place of joy, and glory for his children when they leave the world. The Father prepared it in his decree from eternity, and by his creating power from the foundation of the world: and we are assured it is such a place and state, as fully answers the design of God's love, that is, to make a reasonable creature as happy as it is capable to be. When man was turned rebel against his Creator, when so changed from the divine resemblance impressed at first upon him, into the disgraceful "likeness of the beasts that perish," as the psalmist justly reproaches him; then to pardon us, and prefer us; to restore us to his favour, and image, and the nearest communion with himself in his palace above, is such an astonishing mercy as is only proper to "God who is love." And the love of our Redeemer is equally admirable; when we were expelled paradise, he makes a re-entry for us, and intercepts the stroke of the flaming sword that had destroyed us. We neither know the depth of our misery from whence we are freed, nor the height of glory to which we are raised by our Redeemer. In what heart but that of the Son of God, could ever such compassion and charity be conceived? He took our flesh to heaven to prepare it for us, and interchangeably left his spirit on earth to prepare us for heaven. How just is the solemn and terrible denunciation of the apostle, "He that loves not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema, maranatha." And how are we obliged to God for the blessed and glorious gospel, that infinitely excels all human books in the matter it contains, the everlasting happiness of man, and the certain way to obtain it, and in the manner of conveying those great and sacred truths by divine revela-

tion? And what an argument of thankfulness is it to consider the distinguishing grace of God; that when the most are so blind in the clear light of the gospel, as not to discover the lustre of the pearl of price, and so immersed in vanities as to disrelish heavenly joys, that he is pleased to enlighten the eyes of our mind, that we may know "what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints." The number of fools that understand not the price that is put into their hands, in comparison of the truly wise, is greater than of common stones that lie in the mire of the streets, to precious stones of the highest value, diamonds, and rubies: "How affectionately should we give thanks to the Father who has made us meet for the inheritance of the saints in light." But we have such allays by the relics of carnality, that without the heavenly Spirit's inspiring our cold earth, we shall never be ardent and lively in the praises of our blessed benefactor. Even David himself was fain to call upon his soul with repeated fervency, and excite every faculty within him, "to bless the Lord, who had forgiven his iniquities, and redeemed his life from destruction, and crowned him with lovingkindness, and tender mercies."

2. From hence we may infer the great guilt of unbelievers in the christian church; and such are all those who implicitly despise and reject heaven for the present world. This will aggravate the sin and sentence of the carnal and worldly, that they despise such glorious realities for empty vanities. Desperate gamesters, that venture a kingdom at every throw! What blindness of mind, or rather perverseness of heart is it, that men pursue with their best strength and desires, the fading and false world, and slight heaven an inestimable and everlasting treasure. Certainly when death shall open their eyes, they will have changed thoughts of things. It is related by a wise historian, * that a citizen pleaded his own cause of great moment before Philip king of Macedon, who slept during the plea; and a little after passed an unrighteous judgment against him; the injured person replied, I appeal from your sentence. A word that seemed so presumptuous to an independent sovereign, that with indignation the king asked him, to whom he appealed?

* Plut.

He answered, from the king sleeping, to the king waking. Thus men who are led by sense, are asleep, whilst the cause of infinite concernment, eternal salvation, is faithfully pleaded by the advocates of their souls; and they determine for the interest of the flesh against the spirit: but their waking thoughts will discover the unrighteousness of their carnal judgment. In the next state how will they with restless anguish remember their foolish bargain, to exchange an everlasting treasure for fading toys? We may a little conjecture the torments of the damned, by the terrors of the dying; then the enlightened guilty conscience makes them cry out, O that we had been wise, so to use the world that we might enjoy God! O that we had been so careful to have obtained an interest in heaven, as we have been to gain the earth! Then the stinging remorse begins that shall never end.

3. Let us make it our fixed aim, our zealous constant endeavour to secure our title to this heavenly inheritance. Let eternity be our counsellor, and guide our choice. Let us not build our felicity on the sand, but on the rock that cannot be shaken. Such is the excellent goodness of God revealed in the gospel, that every person that sincerely and regularly seeks heaven, shall obtain it, and no person shall be deprived of it, but for his wilful neglect. Now our blessed Saviour, who opened the eternal kingdom, has declared to us upon what terms it may be obtained, in his conference with Nicodemus; "Verily, verily I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." John 3. Natural birth, and accomplishments, though never so high and noble, are of no advantage there. The degeneracy of man from his primitive holiness, makes him both unworthy and incapable of having a right or possession of heaven, without a divine change, a spiritual regeneration. The supernatural inheritance is annexed to the being born of God: that is, the receiving a principle of life, and actions suitable to the life of God, in universal holiness and righteousness. It is not a ground of title to heaven, that we have a natural alliance to God, as the Father of spirits in the first creation, but we must be his offspring by a new and more excellent creation, according to our Saviour's words, "That which is born of the Spirit, is spirit. We must be renewed in the spirit of our minds," spiritualized in our affections, before

we can obtain an interest in his love, which was forfeited by our rebellion, and consequently in his kingdom. Adoption into God's family, and the line of heaven, is always in conjunction with the renovation of the divine nature and image in us. The Holy Spirit witnesses with our spirits, "that we are the children of God:" but his witnessing is always consequent to his working in us those graces that constitute us to be the children of God: an humble fear to offend him, a care to please him, a zeal for his glory, delight in communion with him, resignation to his will and wisdom, trust on his fatherly love, and a desire to be in his blessed presence. By the discovery of these filial affections, our divine relation is made sure. The apostle infers, "if sons, then heirs." Holiness is the infallible evidence of election; for "the vessels of mercy are prepared by holiness for glory;" the seal of adoption, whereby God's children are distinguished from the world; and "the earnest of their inheritance" for heaven, 2 Cor. 5. 5. is a blissful state of purity; and the graces with the comforts of the Spirit, are the beginnings of it here. It is further to be observed, that our right in the heavenly inheritance, depends upon our union with Christ. He instates his members in the same relation with himself to God. Thus he declares to his disciples, "I ascend to my Father, and your Father, to my God, and your God." Christ's relation hath precedency in point of dignity and causality; and he derives a right to us in his Father's house: "we are co-heirs with Christ." Now it is universally and necessarily true what the apostle saith, "Whoever is in Christ, is a new creature." For our vital union with him, is by the sanctifying Spirit on Christ's part; and by faith and love on our part. Briefly, "without holiness no man shall see God." The exclusion is absolute and universal of all unsanctified persons. It is impossible God should admit them into heaven; for the rights of justice are inviolable: we must come to Christ's tribunal before we come to his throne: we must "come to God the judge of all, before we are admitted into the number of just men made perfect." Heb. 12. 23. According to our works the reward will be: and men are incapable of enjoying heaven without holiness. The wisdom of God appears, in that the various sorts of creatures live in the elements from which they were produced, and have natures suitable to the places of their residence. The beasts that were formed from

the earth, walk and rest there: the birds and fishes that were produced out of the waters, the one sort flies in the air, that is, rarefied water; the other swims in water, that is, the thickest air; and that wisdom more evidently appears in suiting the everlasting states of men to their moral dispositions, "thus we must be born from above," if we would joyfully live above, * The apostle tells us, "That flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven." The natural body must be spiritualized and invested with celestial qualities, before it can enter into that glorious place: and the reason is more strong, that earthly sensual souls can never enter into heaven, there being an absolute contrariety, and opposition between the habitual constitution of such, and that place and state: they must be holy and heavenly, to be prepared for the divine presence, and to converse with the purified assembly above; "till they are wrought for that blessed end," 2 Cor. 5. 5. cleansed, and purified, and endued with holy qualities, till they are "made meet, they cannot possess the inheritance of the saints in light." How vain and impossible are the hopes of unrenewed sinners? The presence and conversation of the saints is now an offence to them, damps their carnal jollity and wild mirth, for it upbraids their neglect of serious religion. How fearful will the sight of God be to them? If the unpurged eye cannot bear the light of a candle, how will it sustain the glorious light of the sun? The Lord's day, in its sacred employment, is their burden; how can they expect to enjoy an everlasting sabbath above? How can there be a lively hope of heaven, that implies perfection of holiness, when they neither seriously desire, nor endeavour to be holy? They may have a cobweb hope that will be swept away, but hope that is as an anchor to secure the soul, hath always a purifying influence on the heart and life. "Whoever hath this hope of being" like to Christ in glory, "purifies himself even as he is pure." 1 John 3. 3. In short, as the Jews had a carnal conceit of the Messias, and transformed him into a temporal prince coming with pomp and splendour, to free their nation from bondage, and exalt it to the highest dominion in the world: and this conceit so strongly possessed them, that when the Son of God, who was holy, harmless, and undefiled, and separate from sin-

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ners, appeared in an humble state to reform and save mankind, they rejected him: thus the unregenerate have a carnal conceit of heaven: they can only fancy it as a place of visible glory, and a sanctuary and refuge from the torments of hell, and in that notion desire it; but as the place wherein that holy God is enjoyed and glorified by the saints, they cannot desire nor delight in it.

4. From hence we should be induced to regulate our minds, affections, and conversation, becoming our present state and future hopes. Our Father's house, our everlasting home is above, and here we are strangers in condition, and should be so in disposition to present things. This should lessen our esteem, our desires and delights, and moderate our endeavours with respect to the present world. It is the wise and earnest counsel of St. Peter, "Dearly beloved brethren, I beseech you, as pilgrims and strangers, abstain from fleshly lusts, that war against the soul." Sensual lusts darken the mind, that it doth not rightly value things, nor make judicious comparisons between superficial fleeting things of time, and the sure and solid good things of eternity. The lower appetites are not capable nor careful to obtain a spiritual and future happiness, but intensely applied to what is present and sensible. But the serious thoughts of our present tenure, how frail, how uncertain, and of the next state how unchangeable and fixed, would be effectual to frame our hearts that we may manage the world with indifferent affections; "To rejoice in it, as if we rejoiced not; to buy as if we possessed not; to use it so as not to abuse it." How doth the faith of the saints under the law upbraid our infidelity. They had not so clear a revelation of the heavenly state, yet they "confessed they were pilgrims and strangers on earth, and desired a better country." And David not only when he was as a partridge chased upon the mountains, but when seated on the royal throne, acknowledges, "We are strangers, as all our fathers were;" and his affections were accordingly weaned from the world. Was ever passenger so foolish, that being to pass over a narrow strait of the sea of a day's sailing, makes provisions for a voyage of a year? or that will be at great cost to paint an inn, and adorn it with rich furniture, where he is to lodge but a night? It is incomparably more reproachful

folly, to spend the best of our time, and strength, and spirits for the gaining the present world, as if we were to continue here for ever. How many are sensual, and secure in their earthly enjoyments, till as the rich voluptuary, that was clothed in purple, and fared deliciously every day, they unexpectedly die, and irrecoverably drop into hell. Just like a traveller, that lays himself under the shadow of some trees in his way home, and sleeps till the night with its darkness and dangers surprises him, and he is destroyed by robbers or wild beasts. How plain and necessary a lesson is the vanity and shortness of the present life? but how few effectually learn it? The psalmist addresses himself to God for instruction; "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." Let men fancy what they please of their tenure here, they are "but strangers, and have no continuing city here;" and the consequent duty is most clearly and strongly urged by the apostle, "Let them seek one to come."

5. Let our conversation be in heaven, whilst we are upon the earth. Every thing in nature, hath a tendency to its original and perfection. Rivers that come from the sea, are in a living motion returning thither; if you stop their course, and confine them, though in receptacles of marble, they corrupt and die. The divine nature in the saints hath a strong tendency to heaven from whence it came, and raiseth the soul by solemn thoughts, and ardent desires, to that blessed place. A philosopher that was asked of what country he was; replied, he was a citizen of the world. The scripture corrects the language, and teaches us that we are citizens of heaven; we are passing to the Jerusalem above, the "Land of promise, the true land of the living:" and all our aims and endeavours should have a final respect thither. "Our hearts should be where our treasure is." How joyful, how advantageous is a heavenly conversation? The serious and believing contemplation of heaven, is a temperate ecstacy, and brings the soul into the divine presence: anticipates the joy of it by a sweet foretaste, by a supernatural elevation of mind; by frequent lively thoughts of our glorious inheritance, we gradually enter into it: the prospect of that causes in the saints, a holy contempt of the world, as not worthy our ambition and diligence: it causes such a self-denial from the inviting

temptations of sense, that men, whose portion is in this life, are forced to admire their restraint from those objects that ravish carnal hearts. A heavenly christian will improve sensible things for spiritual ends; as feathers that have a natural weight inclining to the centre, yet planted in the wings of a bird, by a living motion, carry it aloft in the free air. Our rising in the morning, is an emblem of the resurrection from the grave, to behold the bright day of eternity. All the refreshments and comforts of the present life, should be an advantage to raise our minds to God, who is the supreme good, whose fulness eminently contains all good, and infinitely exceeds all our expectations. Heavenly love will dry up the vanity of our thoughts and affections, and rescue the mind from the prostitution to sensible things, and most pleasantly exercise it upon things above. Love between friends is maintained by immediate converse, or by letters, when absent: thus is love between God and the soul: and if God, that is to himself his own blessedness, his own kingdom and glory, yet is pleased in his gracious communications to his children on earth; how much more should they by frequent and affectionate duties, address to him who is their eternal infinite good. Thus they are acquainted with him, and enjoy a sweet peace, and obtain an humble confidence of appearing before him in his holy and glorious habitation: whereas those who live without God in the world, are justly fearful of death; for then the spirit returns to God that gave it. Briefly, let us with zealous affections, and persevering diligence prepare ourselves for the presence of God, and the society of blessed spirits in our Father's house: "Let us always abound in the work of the Lord, knowing our labour is not in vain:" let us join works of charity with works of piety; employ the fading riches of the world for the relief of the saints; that as our Saviour promises "when we shall fail," when in the hour of death our "flesh and hearts shall fail us," and our souls be dislodged from our earthly tabernacles, we "may be received into eternal habitations." Luke 16. 9. The everlasting Judge, that dispenses rewards and punishments, has acquainted us with the rule of judgment at the last day: those who mercifully relieve him in his members, shall "inherit the kingdom of glory;" and those who neglect that duty, shall be cast into the lake of fire. Though many who are wretchedly careless of doing good according to their ability, now satisfy themselves that they

are not injurious to others: yet it will be a small mitigation of their sentence at last, that they are condemned, not for the defect of justice, but of charity.

6. Let the belief that there are mansions of rest and joy prepared for the saints in their Father's house, gloriously support them under their heaviest troubles here. The world is the devil's circuit, wherein he is always ranging about seeking to devour: the pleasant things of the world are his temptations to ensnare the carnal; the men of the world are his instruments to oppress the saints; and were it not for the restraints of the divine power, what desolations would be made in God's heritage? It was a strange and barbarous custom among the Persians, * that upon the death of the emperor, for five days the empire was left without government. And as upon removing the stone from the fabulous cave of Æolus, the winds broke out in their fury: so by taking away the authority of the laws, licence was given to all licentiousness, and the whole kingdom was in mortal paroxysms. All were in arms, some to do injuries, others to revenge them: the chastity of none was secure, but concealed, nor the estates of any but defended: the bridle of fear was taken off, no wickedness but was boldly committed, or attempted, and the kingdom became a field of bloody war. But when the new king was proclaimed, all things were immediately reduced to order, that the advantage of government might be set off by the experimental confusions and mischiefs of anarchy. But if God left the perverted world, and satan the prince of it, one day to their rage against his people, did he not shut "it in with doors and bars," as he doth the impetuous ocean; so swelling and diffusive is their malignity, that it would, like the deluge, drown all, and not a remnant of the saints would be left. Yet God wisely permits many temporal evils to be inflicted on his servants by their enemies, for the trial of their fidelity, and their noble resolution to glorify him whatever they suffer for his sake. And it becomes them, with an undisturbed serenity of mind, and harmony of affections, with an invincible patience, to bear all the scorn and contempt, all the malice, and fury to which they are exposed upon a christian account. Let them remember "they are strangers and sojourners here," and live by other laws than the

* Sext. Empiric cont. Mathem.

world doth, which causes their hatred: but in their Father's house there will be perfect rest. St. Paul, who had experience of both in a singular manner, declares, "I reckon that the sufferings of the present state, are not worthy to be compared to the glory that shall be revealed in us." In that state of pure felicity, there are no remains of afflicting evils; all is peace, and joy, and glory.

* Seneca the philosopher, when an exile, and confined to the mountains of Corsica, entertained himself with the contemplation of the heavens, and the bright luminaries, in their various but regular motions: thus when banished from the court and city, he dwelt amongst the stars, and casting his eyes down upon the earth, despised all human greatness and possessions, (that are so vainly magnified by figurative flatteries) as we do a grain of sand. Did philosophy inspire him with such principles of patience and fortitude? yet it ascended no higher than the visible heavens. How much more should faith that raises a christian, by high and steady thoughts, to the supreme heaven where the divine glory shines, comfort him in all the troubles of this world. Add further, that it is an excellent preservative from envy and fretfulness at the prosperity of the wicked, to consider that their felicity is as transient and vanishing as the trouble of the saints: "I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree: yet he passed away, and lo, he was not: yea, I sought him, and he could not be found." Psal. 37. 35, 36. All the riches, and greatness, and pleasures of the world are weighed, numbered, and measured by the psalmist, and found to be as light and fading as vanity. "Naked they came into the world, and naked they must go out;" and how much more tormenting will it be to be stripped of all their enjoyments; how much more sorrowful will they be to go from their great possessions, than for one that leaves the world, and never had them? Their hopes are like the giving up of the ghost, and expire with their breath for ever. "I went into the sanctuary, saith the troubled saint, then understood I their end:"

* Dum oculi mei ab illo spectaculo cujus insatiabiles sunt, non abducantur, dum mihi lunam, solemq; intueri liceat, dum cæteris inhærere Syderibus, & dum cum his sim, & Cœlestibus qua homini fas est miscear, dum animam ad cognitarum rerum conspectum tendentem in sublimi semper habeam, quantum refert mea quid calcem? *Consol. ad Hlor. c.* 9.

Psal. 73. 17. the end of their felicity, and the miseries of the righteous. Besides the evils suffered for righteousness-sake, there are innumerable sorrows that befal the saints here. How many afflicting diseases, sad occurrences, vexing passions harass them? Some afflictions are so wounding to their spirits, that no balm that grows on earth can heal. But the lively hope of heaven is an universal cure for all their troubles. Let the mourning christian consider the wise providence of God, that orders all events, and believe his love in sending, and his end in all their afflictions. Such is the divine power that God could immediately free us from all troubles, as easily, as turn the wind from a blasting quarter of the heavens, to the most benign, and refreshing. Are we pained with diseases? he can more easily change the tone of nature in a sickly body, and make it healthy; than one can change the stop in an organ that presently alters the sound: but his love dispenses bitter thing to us, that are necessary for our spiritual and everlasting good. His end is to prepare us for heaven, that is prepared for us. The apostle declares, "He that hath wrought us for the self-same thing, is God:" that is, made us fit for the heavenly glory. The divine disposal of things here to the saints, has a certain order to their eternal state. He purgeth out our vicious guilty affections to the world by sharp physic, that our hopes of heaven may be more pure and vigorous, more actuated by serious thoughts and intense desires, that we may feel the sense of the psalmist's expression, "O when shall we come and appear before God!"

In short, art thou in the vale of tears, languishing in sorrow, and dying every day? by faith ascend to "the mountains of spices," the blessed place above, and thou wilt find the comforts of God to revive and delight thy soul.

7. Let this reconcile death to us. The pale horse is sent to bring us to our Father's house. The apostle expresses the true christian temper: "In this we groan earnestly, desiring to be clothed with our house that is from heaven: and we are willing rather to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord." 2 Cor. 5. 2, 8. Every saint in the present world is both a prisoner and a captive: and his soul is detained from the glorious liberty of the sons of God, by confinement to his body. Therefore methinks he should not merely be content to die out of the necessity of nature, when he can live no longer, but desire the

happy removal, and say with the psalmist, "I rejoiced when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord." It is true, nature will recoil, and the extinguishing the present life, with all its sensible pleasant operations, is uneasy to us: but as when the candles are put out, the sun rises in its brightness, so when the natural life ceases, the spiritual life springs forth in its oriency and glory: "When the earthly tabernacle is dissolved, the naked separate soul shall be received into a building not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Our joyful affections, in leaving the world, and ascending to heaven, should be in some manner suitable to our reception there. What a joyful welcome will entertain us from God himself? Our Saviour comforted his disciples with a heavenly valediction, "I go to my Father, and your Father; to my God, and your God." The gracious relation sweetens the glorious. He that joyfully receives the rebellious, but penitent son to grace, will joyfully receive his obedient sons to glory. He that now receives their prayers with the affection of a father, will receive their persons with the dearest expressions of love. His fatherly providence watched over them in the way, and will triumphantly bring them home. Here many blessed testimonies of God's love are given to the saints, that produce such a spiritual sweetness in their hearts, that they esteem his lovingkindness as better than life, more worth than all the world; but the full revealing of his love is only in heaven. And as a child knows by experience the love of his father, but the degrees and strength of his affection he does not understand till arrived at mature age, and sees the inheritance his father invests him with. Thus in heaven only the saints shall know the excellent and perfect love of God to them, when they are possessed of that glorious kingdom, his most free and rich gift, which transcends all their present thoughts. And our blessed Redeemer, that by so many titles has an interest in us, that is not contented in his own personal glory, without our partaking of it, that by his resurrection opened the grave, and by his ascension opened heaven for us; how dearly will he receive us? He esteems believers to "be his joy and crown," and with an ecstacy of affection will present them to his Father; "Behold I, and the children that God has given me." The angels and saints above overflow with joy; when

the soul, as a pure spark freed from its ashes, ascends to the element of spirits, how joyfully is it entertained by that glorious assembly? The angels that rejoice at the conversion of a sinner, will much more at the glorification of a saint: and the saints have a new accession to their joy, upon the reception of any of their brethren to that state of felicity.

The saints of all ages may be resembled to a fleet of merchant-men that are bound for the same port, some arrive sooner, others later, according to the time of their setting out: but those who arrive first, how do they welcome their friends that come safely afterwards? An imperfect resemblance how dearly and joyfully the saints that are gone before us welcome those who arrive in heaven every day, knowing the dangerous seas they have passed through, where so many have been cast away and lost for ever. All heaven is in music, celebrating the praises of God, and expressing their joyful sense, when a victorious saint is come to receive his reward. How does this consideration upbraid us, that we are so unwilling to be dissolved, and to be with our best friends in the best place? that our tears and sorrows for leaving the earthly tabernacle, and the low comforts of this life, should continue till we come to the gate of heaven? How can we be content with the imperfections of the present state? Here we are as distant from complete happiness, as the highest heaven is from the earth. Where is our faith in the promises of God? Where is our love to our Redeemer and our souls? The loathness of a sincere christian to die, and be with Christ, is a deflection from his christianity.

Lastly. This should refresh our sorrows for the loss of our dearest friends that die in the Lord. Here is a mournful parting, when they are laid in the cold, dark and silent mansions of the earth: when those whom we loved as our own souls, are finally separated from us, and we shall see their faces no more. And as one that is directed by the light of a torch in the night, when it is taken away, is more sensible of the darkness, than if he had not been enlightened by it: so when those dear friends are taken away, whose conversation was the light and joy of our lives, we are more darkened with sorrow, than if we had never enjoyed them. But if we duly consider things, there is more reason of joy, than sorrow, at the departure of the saints. Our

Saviour tells his disciples, that were mourning for his signifying that he must go away, "If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I say I must go to my Father to reign with him in sovereign glory." Sincere love will make us more to rejoice in their gain, than to grieve for our loss. Especially considering within a little while we shall be inseparably united in the kingdom of glory, where love reigns for ever.

A short Character of Mr. David Clarkson.

Although the commendation of the dead is often suspected to be guilty of flattery, either in disguising their real faults, or adorning them with false virtues; and such praises are pernicious to the living: yet of those persons whom God hath chosen to be the singular objects of his grace, we may declare the praiseworthy qualities and actions which reflect an honour upon the giver, and may excite us to imitation. And such was Mr. David Clarkson, a person worthy of dear memory and value, who was furnished with all those endowments that are requisite in an accomplished minister of the gospel.

He was a man of sincere godliness, and true holiness, which is the divine part of a minister, without which all other accomplishments are not likely to be effectual for the great end of the ministry, that is, to translate sinners from the kingdom of darkness, into the kingdom of God's dear Son. Conversion is the special work of divine grace, and it is most likely that God will use those as instruments in that blessed work, who are dear to him, and earnestly desire to glorify him. God ordinarily works in spiritual things, as in natural: for as in the production of a living creature, besides the influence of the universal cause, there must be an immediate agent of the same kind for the forming of it: so the divine wisdom orders it, that holy and heavenly ministers should be the instruments of making others so. Let a minister be master of natural and artificial eloquence, let him understand all the secret springs of persuasion, let him be furnished with learning and knowledge, yet he is not likely to succeed in his divine employment without sanctifying grace. It is that gives him a tender sense of the worth of souls, that warms his heart with ardent requests to God, and with zealous affections to men for their salvation. Besides, an unholy minister

unravels in his actions his most accurate discourses in the pulpit; and like a carbuncle that seems animated with the light and heat of fire, but is a cold dead stone: so though with appearing earnestness he may urge men's duties upon them, yet he is cold and careless in his own practice, and his example enervates the efficacy of his sermons. But this servant of God was a real saint, a living spring of grace in his heart diffused itself in the veins of his conversation. His life was a silent repetition of his holy sermons.

He was a conscientious improver of his time for acquiring of useful knowledge, that he might be throughly furnished for the work of his divine calling. And his example upbraids many ministers, who are strangely careless of their duty, and squander away precious time, of which no part is despicable and to be neglected. The filings of gold are to be preserved. We cannot stop the flight of time, nor recal it when passed. *Volat irrevocabile tempus.* The sun returns to us every day, and the names of the months every year, but time never returns. But this servant of God was faithful in improving this talent, being very sensible (to use his own words) 'That the blood of the soul runs out in wasted time.' When deprived of his public ministry, he gave himself wholly to reading and meditation, whereby he obtained an eminent degree of sacred knowledge, and was conversant in the retired parts of learning, in which many who are qualified to preach a profitable sermon, are unacquainted.

His humility and modesty were his distinctive characters wherein he excelled. What a treasure was concealed under the veil of humility? What an illustrious worth was shadowed under his virtuous modesty? He was like a picture drawn by an excellent master in painting, but placed in the dark, so that the exactness of the proportions, and the beauty of colours do not appear. He would not put his name to those excellent tracts, that are extant, wherein his learning and judgment are very conspicuous. He was well satisfied to serve the church, and illustrate the truth, and to remain in his beloved secrecy.

In his conversation a comely gravity mixed with an innocent pleasantness, were attractive of respect and love. He was of a calm temper, not ruffled with passions, but gentle, and kind, and good; and even in some contentious writings, he preserved an

equal tenour of mind, knowing that we are not likely to discover the truth in a mist of passion: his breast was the temple of peace.

In the discharge of his sacred work, his intellectual abilities, and holy affections were very evident.

In prayer, his solemnity and reverence were becoming one that saw him who is invisible: his tender affections, and suitable expressions, how melting and moving, that might convey a holy heat and life to dead hearts, and dissolve obdurate sinners in their frozen tombs.

In his preaching, how instructive and persuasive to convince and turn the carnal and worldly, from the love of sin, to the love of holiness; from the love of the earth, to the love of heaven. The matter of his sermons was clear and deep, and always judiciously derived from the text: the language was neither gaudy and vain, with light trimmings, nor rude and neglected, but suitable to the oracles of God. Such were his chosen acceptable words, as to recommend heavenly truths, to make them more precious and amiable to the minds and affections of men; like the colour of the sky, that makes the stars to shine with a more sparkling brightness.

Briefly, whilst opportunity continued, with alacrity, and diligence, and constant resolution, he served his blessed Master, till his languishing distempers, which natural means could not remove, prevailed upon him. But then the best physician provided him the true remedy of patience. His death was unexpected, yet; as he declared, no surprise to him, for he was entirely resigned to the will of God; he desired to live no longer, than to be serviceable: his soul was supported with the blessed hope of enjoying God in glory. With holy Simeon, he had Christ in his arms, and departed in peace to see the salvation of God above. How great a loss the church has sustained in his death, is not easily valued; but our comfort is, God never wants instruments to accomplish his blessed work.

A

SERMON

PREACHED AT THE FUNERAL

OF

MR. BENJAMIN ASHURST.

TO HIS HONOURED FRIEND

HENRY ASHURST, ESQ.

Sir,

I Have complied with your desire in publishing the following Sermon upon the death of your dear brother. The Sovereign Disposer of all things has been pleased to take away in a few years several persons very near to you in the consanguinity of nature, and younger than yourself: a solemn call to remember you, that the last day of your present life is approaching that will be attended with its night, and to excite you to prepare for your great change from time to eternity. You have indeed peculiar obligations and encouragement to be religious in a degree of eminence; whose father was so bright a light, and guide to all his relations in the everlasting way, by his holy counsels and heavenly conversation. Of him I could speak many excellent things, were not his goodness so universally known, that de-

traction itself could never fasten an unworthy imputation upon him.

It shall suffice to give this short character of him sincerely: he was adorned with all divine graces, and by their conspicuous exercise was singularly eminent among the saints. He made so particular an application of that general precept, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, with all thy strength, and with all thy mind," as if it had been solely given to himself; the love of God inflamed his heart, and shined in his life. This made him one day in a week (besides that which is sacred by divine appointment) to withdraw himself from the business of the world, that he might more freely enjoy communion with the blessed object of his spiritual desires. His piety was in conjunction with all those virtues that are requisite to accomplish a christian: temperance and purity of manners, justice and equity in his commerce with others, and those virtues that cast a more lively lustre, and have an attractive force upon men. A rare humility, an amiable meekness, condescending affability and sweetness, compassionate charity and beneficence to the souls and bodies of men, were really exhibited in his deportment and actions. He was so lovely in his conversation, so loving to all, that he

was beloved of all. The uniform and regular tenour of his life obtained this testimony, that was given to our blessed Master, "he did all things well." A constant serenity reigned in his countenance, the visible sign of the divine calm in his breast, "the peace of God that passes understanding." And for an entire conformity to our Saviour, that the image of his meek suffering evil, as well as his zealous doing good, might radiantly appear in this chosen saint, the divine providence called him forth to a very sharp trial; for being under the afflicting severities of the stone, and by the advice of his dear friends persuaded to submit to the dangerous remedy of cutting, with what resigned submission did he yield himself to the will of God? With what tranquillity did he expect the issue either of surviving or dying? You remember his words before that terrible operation, 'When I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil:' when so great a wound was made in his flesh as an open passage for death to enter, and such cruel pains followed as struck the spectators with trembling, he endured them with an inspired patience and constancy. Thus God was pleased to perfect his dear servant by sufferings.

Your descent from such a father should be

a powerful incentive to you to imitate his admirable example: you should consider whose name you bear: to be a faint copy of so bright an original, as it is below your duty, so I am persuaded will not satisfy your affections. Methinks a sacred ambition should inflame you to excel in "all holiness and godliness," that the living image of your father's graces may be clearly visible in your person and conversation. Proceed, dear Sir, in the everlasting way, wherein you are so happily advanced; be always aspiring, and with zeal endeavouring to obtain the celestial prize. I unfeignedly recommend yourself, your excellent lady, and your family to the divine blessing. I am with great respect,

SIR,

Your affectionate and faithful Servant,

WILLIAM BATES.

A

SERMON, &c.

REV. XXII. 12.

And he said, behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

THESE words were spoke by the Lord Jesus Christ, the supreme judge of the world, upon his finishing the revelation to St. John. In them we may observe, 1. An excitation, "behold." 2. The celestial object, "I come quickly." 3. The end of his coming, "my reward is with me, to render to every one according to his works."

It is observable that the prophetical notice of the Lord's coming to judgment is ushered in with great solemnity: thus Enoch the seventh from Adam, foretelling his judiciary appearance, said, "Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all:" and the circumstance of the suddenness of his coming, is used as a powerful motive to awaken our drowsy spirits, and fix our scattered minds entirely on this so eminent an object. So the apostle James gives an

awful admonition, "Behold the Judge stands before the door" ready to pass a final sentence. And St. John breaks forth in an ecstacy at this admirable spectacle, "Behold, he comes with clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they which pierced him:" and the everlasting Judge himself assures us of his speedy coming with this preface, "Behold, I come quickly." The words contain this proposition:

It is our high wisdom and duty, to represent by actual and solemn thoughts the certain and speedy coming of Christ to the righteous judgment of the world.

I will illustrate and prove this doctrine in the following order. First; Consider what is revealed in the scripture of his *certain* coming to judgment. Secondly; The circumstance of time, his coming *quickly*. Thirdly; The *rewards* he will then immediately distribute. Fourthly; The respective *difference of the rewards*, according to the *actions* of men in this life. And then apply it.

I. In the managing the first point, I shall not insist upon the proofs of a future judgment, but only direct to the fountains of arguments that are demonstrative to attentive and unperverted minds.

It is a doctrine of natural reason and divine faith: if we consider the essential and necessary perfections of God, or the frame of man, we must strongly infer his accountableness for his actions. There is an essential subordination between man and his divine Maker, and being endowed with understanding and free faculties, it is becoming the wisdom of God to govern him by a law, to regulate his choice and actions: this is the rule that distinguishes between virtue and vice, and the holiness, justice, and goodness of God are infallible assurances to us, that there will be recompences according to the diversity of men's actions, either conforming or transgressing his laws. Besides, every man has an internal sentiment, a judicial impression in his breast of this great truth. Conscience, the inseparable faculty of the reasonable soul, has a directing and reflecting light, to show us our duty, to examine our actions, and accordingly to excuse and comfort, or to accuse and terrify; which acts necessarily imply, that it is deputed by the Supreme Judge of the world, to observe our ways in order to its final testimony before his tribunal. This proof is the more convincing and pal-

pable, in that those persons who are exempted from human judgment by their power and dignity, those who are above reproof, and by a fatal privilege damn themselves with less contraction than others, yet are not impenetrable to the stings of conscience, but at times have a conscious fealing of their guilt: and in those who have so far stupified conscience, that it is either silent, or speaks with a low voice, yet when they are in distress, especially in the approaches of death, conscience recovers life and vigour, sets their sins in order before them, and flashes the terrors of future judgment in their faces; an evident presage that although conscience be not strong enough to control their licentious appetites here, it will be strong enough for their conviction and torment hereafter.

Now divine revelation renews the decayed notions of the future judgment that are natural to the minds of men, and confirms them against the opposition of the carnal faculties, it regulates and enlarges them, with respect to the certainty and circumstances of it, who shall be Judge, and the manner of his coming, and transacting the affairs of the great day.

I will more particularly insist upon the certain coming of Jesus Christ in person to judge the world; and for the orderly discourse of it, it is observable that a double coming of Christ is foretold in scripture: the first in a low condition; the second in a glorious state. The ends of his first and second coming regulate their manner: the Messias came at first, to be the mediator between the righteous God and sinful man, by patiently suffering the most afflictive evils; to propitiate the incensed justice of heaven against us; to restore us by humility who fell by pride; to illustrate his signal love to us, to recommend by the efficacy of his example, the meek suffering all the transient evils of the world: but the second will be to perform the last act of his regal office, to determine the eternal states of angels and men, and suitably in the glory of his Deity. The divine oracles were never less obscure than in describing the first and second coming of the Messias; the eclipses of the Sun of Righteousness, and his future glory: and the most clear accomplishment of them in his humiliation, is a convincing visible argument they shall be fulfilled in his exaltation. Now in regard his lowly obedience, and sorrowful sufferings, are the titles to his triumph,

and the height of his glory shall be answerable to his extreme debasement; I will briefly compare his first and second coming.

His first coming "was in the likeness of sinful flesh:" though he was exempt from the rebellious sin of our first parents, and the poisonous tincture that is derived to their common race, being miraculously conceived by the Holy Ghost, yet he was charged with the frailties, and exposed to those afflictions that are the penalties of sin. His first reception in the world was so mean, that if poverty itself had assumed a visible appearance, it could not be received more poorly. He was born in a stable, and died on the cross, the humble poverty of his beginning was not discordant from his ignominious end: and his life from his first breath to his last in the world, was a course through poverty, disgrace, injuries, indignities, and the most cruel sufferings. He was made not only lower than the angels, but than the lowest of men: in the language of his type, "a worm and no man." Psal. 22. 6. In this poor, weak, and contemptible state, darkened with the clouds of sorrows, O how unlike to him, who appeared in a celestial vision to the prophet Isaiah, sitting "upon a throne high and lifted up," Isa. 6. 1. and the glorious seraphims in a posture of reverence about him, and in an ecstacy of admiration crying, one to another, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory." John 12. 41.

Carnal eyes could not discover the Son of God in the son of man so vilified and afflicted. The words of the prophet are justly applicable to him in the state of his humiliation, "Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel the Saviour." Isa. 45. 15.

Now to all those steps of our Saviour's depression in his first coming, are correspondent the degrees of his exaltation in his second coming. He shall come the second time from the highest heaven, the true sanctuary of God, and appear "without sin," having perfectly expiated it by his sufferings on earth. His first coming was in dishonour, his "second shall be in glory." He came at first on foot, in "the form of a servant," then he shall come "in the form of God," riding on the bright clouds, "and all the chariots of God, the angels of light attending him." He shall come in the "Glory of his Father," Psal. 68. 17. in

the visible brightness of the Deity. The rods, the thorns, the nails, the cross, all the conspiring instruments of his cruel and disgraceful sufferings shall be exchanged for the ensigns of majesty: his sacred head shall be crowned with glory, of which the sun in its lustre is but a dark shadow; "a sceptre of righteousness shall be in his hand," he shall sit on a "great white throne," the emblem of his unspotted holiness.

His first coming was "in weakness," but his second shall be "in power." Thus he told his enemies, "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." Mat. 26. 64. His voice shall break the silence of the grave, and all that are in the bowels of the earth, or the bottom of the sea, shall come forth; "They that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; they that have done evil, to the resurrection of damnation." John 5. 29. By his omnipotence "he will change our vile bodies, that they may be fashioned like to his glorious body." Phil. 3. 21. As gold at first taken out of the mine, seems but common earth, but by the refining fire has a brightness superinduced, that it seems rather the product of the fire, than from the vein of the earth from whence it was taken: thus our bodies that in their original are but earth; "from the earthly Adam;" shall by the "Power of the Lord from heaven" be made heavenly, clothed with a living lustre and vigour. He will then judge the "god of this world," with all the invisible legions of rebellious spirits, and force their submission to his high tribunal. He will dissolve the old world, and raise the new: "from his face the earth and the heaven shall flee away, and there shall be no place found for them. According to his promise we look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwells righteousness."

Briefly, in his first coming he was "despised and rejected of men," condemned and crucified, but then he shall be revealed from heaven with "his mighty angels, in flaming fire, to take vengeance upon all that know not God, and disobey the gospel." How will the wicked be surprised "with the terrors of the Lord?" At the promulgation of the law, the senses of hearing and seeing, that are the inlets of terror, were so strongly affected with the presence of God, when fearful lightnings were darted from his eyes, and clouds of smoke came from the breath of his nostrils, and at the "loud sounding of the trumpet, and the

quaking of the mountain;" that the hearts of the spectators were ready to die within them, and Moses himself was "terribly afraid;" but how will the sights and sounds at the last day overwhelm the guilty with terrors, when the Son of God shall appear "in his terrible majesty! when the archangel shall blow the trumpet of God," when the pillars of heaven shall fall, and the foundations of the earth be overthrown, and a dreadful judgment shall pass upon the impenitent transgressors of the eternal law! how will they appear spiritless, in sad confusion in "the great day of the Lord Almighty?"

II. We are to consider the circumstance of time; "his coming quickly." It is verified by universal experience, that no carnal principle does more fortify sinners in a false security, "than putting the evil day far from them," and the presumption that they are not in present danger of God's displeasure, when inevitable and great evils are looked upon as remote, they make a slight impression, but the propinquity of such evils inspires terrors. We have an instance of this in Cain, who (after God had denounced his punishment for his bloody crying sin) full of perplexity and despair breaks forth, "My punishment is greater than I can bear! and it shall come to pass, that every one that findeth me, shall slay me." But when he was secured from present revenge, and expected a long life in this world, he freely indulged his sensual desires, and "built a city," to drown the noise of his accusing conscience. The world follows this way of Cain, and freely pursues the satisfaction of their lusts. When men look upon the divine judgment at an immense distance, and "when the evil servant shall say in his heart, my Lord delays his coming," Mat. 24. 48. he will satisfy both the angry and voluptuous appetites, he "will smite his fellow-servants, and eat and drink with the drunken." To awaken therefore men's drowsy spirits to prepare for the judgment of the great day, to check their exorbitant lusts, "their lasciviousness, excess of wine, and revelling," it is threatened, "they shall give an account of them, to him who is ready to judge the quick and the dead." 1 Pet. 14. 1, 3. And to induce a patient temper and assuage sorrow, the apostle James encourages afflicted christians, "that the Judge stands before the door."

There is a seeming difficulty how to reconcile the predictions of Christ's sudden coming to judgment, with the interval of so

many entire ages lapsed since, and what may remain of time before the last day is uncertain. This difficulty will be resolved by considering the following particulars.

1. The words of the text are to be understood in the strict literal sense: for our Saviour having represented in a visionary scene the state of the church in the several periods of its duration to the end of the world, its conflicts, victory, and triumph over antichristian enemies, and having described the tranquillity, purity and glory of the church in the very last part of time, which is preparative to the glorious everlasting state in the next world, he declares, "I come quickly, and my reward is with me:" Rev. 22. 5. after the final accomplishment of those prophecies, there is no more use of time, "the unjust, and unrighteous, and filthy," continue unchanged and impenitent; "the righteous and holy" Isa. 22. 1. Mich. 7. 1. Heb. 1. are confirmed in their perseverance, and immediately shall receive recompences according to their works.

2. The whole flux of time, from the first to the second coming of Christ is called the "last days." The prophets foretold of an astonishing change that should arrive in the church and the world, that the ceremonial law should be abolished, when the Messias, the substance of it, and perfection was come, and a new covenant be immutably established in the church, till the final expiring of time. In this sense the apostle speaks to christians in the first age of the church; "Now all these things happened unto them for examples, and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." 1 Cor. 10. 11. Now in the division of time, this being the last part of it, for the duration of the world, the second coming of Christ is represented as near. The last glass of time was turned up at the revelation of the gospel by the Son of God, and now the last sands are running; when it is out, it shall never be turned more.

3. Sometimes the speedy coming of Christ to judgment immediately respects the destruction of the Jewish state, and their principal city. Thus in his last sermon on Mount Olivet, the temple being in his view, he foretold "that one stone shall not be left upon another:" and after his describing the fearful events that should surprise that nation, tells his disciples, "Verily I say

unto you, this generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled." Mat. 24. 24. The time of this judgment, is "called the great and illustrious day of the Lord," Acts 2. 20. when by visible vengeance upon that nation, he declared his divine power and glory before the world. And to this famous destruction of the Jews, may refer several places, where the apostle encourages believers to unfainting perseverance in their duty, notwithstanding the cruel opposition they met with from infidels of the Jewish nation: "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves, as the manner of some is, but exhort one another, and so much the more as ye see the day approaching;" Heb. 10. 25. that is, when Christ will appear for the subduing his enemies, and for the relieving his people.

4. We must distinguish between the judgment of sense and of faith, and this will rectify our estimate of the time of God's particular judgments upon earth, and of his universal judgment when he will distribute eternal recompences. To sense "afflictions seem not only grievous," but often they seem long: for sorrow fastens the thoughts upon the affliction; in sharp pains the soul is: as it were confined to the diseased part, and strictly observes all the hours and smaller parts of their duration, which when we are at ease slip away without notice. In distress we would fain hasten away the present time, expecting relief by what shall succeed: and winged time seems slow in its motion. From hence are so many doleful complaints of the saints, "Lord, how long? Lord, make haste:" Psal. 70. 8, 9. as if he had forgot to be gracious to relieve them, and just to repay their cruel enemies. But faith in the divine promises looks to their accomplishment in the time set by the most wise and holy disposer of all things. A steadfast believer never counts God slow in coming to judgment; for he is never too late. "The vision of the church's deliverance is for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak and not lie; though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry." This is applied by the apostle to the particular judgment upon Jerusalem; and is applicable to the universal judgment: "For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry:" Heb. 10. 37. "he bears long with the sufferings of his own elect, yet he will avenge them speedily:" at the prefixed time, when the

number of the elect shall be complete, and all the "Vessels of wrath are fitted for destruction," the discerning Judge will come and separate them for ever.

5. Compare time with eternity. Time is numbered and distinguished by the motions of the sun and moon, and is accounted long or short by us with respect to our transient and limited duration in the present world: but eternity is an endless duration. The whole space of time, from the first motions of the heavens to the last, has not that proportion to eternity, as a short span has to the vast compass of the heaven. Now God, who is absolutely eternal, and truly infinite, measures the continuance of things by his own standard: accordingly the psalmist tells us, "A thousand years in his sight, are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night:" Psal. 90. 4. as the space of a few hours that passes without the least perception in sleep. God comforts his suffering church: "for a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercy will I gather thee: in a little wrath I hid my face from thee, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee." Isa. 54. 7, 8. St. Peter replies to the infidels of the last days, who scornfully say, "Where is the promise of his coming? One day with the Lord is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day:" 2 Pet. 3. 4, 8. all the measures of time are determined in eternity. This estimate will reconcile the two seeming opposite durations, the long delaying, and speedy coming of the Judge.

If a malefactor be taken, sentenced and executed in a day, it is quick justice: now the longest time considered in God's duration is no more than the shortest among men. And the application of this is more sensible and evident, with respect to the particular judgment that immediately attends the death of men, whether graciously rewarding, or justly punishing them: "The afflictions of the saints are but for a moment," 2 Cor. 4. 17. compared with the eternal state of glory they enter into: and though an impenitent sinner live to extreme age, yet "his judgment did not slumber," but was hastening, for his death, that is the end of an hundred years on earth, will be to him the beginning of an hundred thousand years in hell, attended with an endless duration after.

III. We are to consider the *rewards* he will then immediately distribute. What the rewards shall be in their general nature

we may understand, but the degrees of happiness or misery in the future state are beyond the utmost comprehension of our thoughts, or expressions of our words. A child may as soon be instructed to understand and relate the deepest counsels of a senate; as a mortal man can fully conceive or explicate what heaven or hell is. The Judge styles it "my reward, who is the great God and our Saviour:" and it is correspondent to his infinite goodness and bounty, or to his terrible majesty and offended justice. Who can unfold the treasures of his love, or the treasures of his wrath? "Who knows the power of his anger?" Though no resemblance be capable to express fully the sovereign felicity, and the extreme misery in the future state, yet for our instruction they are set forth in the most intelligible and affecting manner with respect to our narrow capacities. The reward of the saints is a state of glory and joy in the presence of the blessed God, the fountain of true felicity. The apostle assures us, that those who continue in well-doing shall be "rewarded with glory, and honour, and immortality." Rom. 2. 7. The reward is shadowed forth by chosen comparisons, a "Crown of glory, a crown of life:" by the joys of a marriage festival that shall be celebrated in the city of God. In short, the reward contains the highest perfection and exceeding satisfaction of the reasonable nature. Our most beautiful expressions darken the eternal brightness of that state: heaven is infinitely better known by one minute's enjoyment, than by the description of the divinest orator.

The recompence from revenging justice is set forth by words of the heaviest signification: by "indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish:" Rom. 2. 8, 9. and by most fearful representations, to typify the torments of the damned: "by the worm that never dies, and the fire that shall never be quenched:" by the blackness of darkness for ever, and the bottomless gulf of horror and misery. Briefly, as the blessed reward eminently contains all those joys, of which we have but dark shadows here, so the punishment is more extreme and fearful than the literal meaning of the most violent figures express. This reward he saith "is with him." This I shall consider in three things.

1. It is a *present reward*. Here the saints have a sure title to "the immortal and undefiled inheritance; a right to the tree

of life. "He that hath the Son, hath everlasting life:" an unfeigned faith that "unites us to Christ, that purifies the heart and conversation, and works by love to our Redeemer," secures to us an entire interest in the kingdom of glory, both upon the account of the purchase of it by the sacred treasure of Christ's blood, and the unchangeable tenour of the gospel, wherein God promises heaven to all obedient believers: but the actual bestowing of this upon their entire persons, is not till the last day. Then the King "will say to them on his right hand, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." He will crown them with his own hands, and immediately introduce them "into his own joys."

Now sentence is passed upon those who disobey the gospel; "He that believes not, is condemned already," but the execution of it is suspended for a while. Though sinful men are guilty of such violent provocations as would conquer all created patience, yet their Judge endures with much long-suffering "the vessels of wrath fitted for destruction." He is the God of patience," it is one of the divine attributes, and cannot be violated by the indignities of rebellious sinners, but has its perfect work in this lower world. He ever enjoys the serenity and blessedness that are inseparable from the perfections of his own nature, and spares the wicked for a time in order to their salvation: but when he comes to judgment, the execution will immediately follow: for the sentence will be peremptory and final; there can be no appeal from it: the Son shall then appear with equal majesty and authority with the Father: "All judgment is committed to him:" and his power to execute the definitive sentence is irresistible, we may read the tenour of it, "Take him, bind him hand and foot, and cast him into outer darkness:" there is no possible escape by flight from his righteous fury, no possible resistance of his almighty power, but the wicked shall presently suffer the decreed vengeance.

2. It is a *complete reward*: for it shall be the issue of final judgment, with respect to "all things done in the body, whether good or evil." Separate souls act in their opposite states: the saints above continually glorify God, and do his commands: the wicked in hell continually blaspheme God: but the obedience of the saints in heaven is not in order to a reward, for they are

actually possessed of it, and complete holiness is a principal part of their felicity: and the sins of the damned do not incur a new guilt, and expose them to more severities of punishment, for they are in the hands of revenging justice, and their sin is a principal part of their punishment. The rewardableness of human actions is limited to the present life; and when men shall appear before the judgment seat of Christ, a full reward will be distributed to them.

Here the faithful servants of God have some vails to encourage them in their work, and to delight in their duty: and in their various sorrows and sufferings they are cheered with some forerunning beams of heavenly light, revived with the air of paradise, refreshed with waters of life from the sacred springs of comfort, the promises of God, "and rejoice in the hope of glory:" but then they are received into God's glorious presence, "where there is fulness of joy, and rivers of pleasure for ever." What defect can there be in their happiness when they are entered into "the joy of their Lord, and joy enters into them" replenishing all their faculties?

Here the wicked feel some beginnings of sorrows, the twinges of an accusing conscience that settles into the undying worm: the first breath of God's indignation sometimes singes them here: but then the flames of it will break forth with vehemence: in this world his dispensation is a compound of justice and mercy, he is unwilling to use extremity: when he is exceedingly provoked, mercy mollifies the rigour of justice, calms the fierceness of his wrath, lightens the weight of his power: he "does not reward them according to their iniquities:" but then nothing will break the blow of his revenging hands: strict justice will then inflict a punishment commensurate to the guilt of their sins. All the leading faculties of the soul, the mind, the fancy, the memory, the will, the affections, that have been polluted with sin, all the sensitive faculties of the body that have been instrumental in the commission of sin, shall be tormented. The voluptuous wretch, whose soul was drowned in flesh and blood, and riotously feasted every day, his tongue was tormented in the fire.

Briefly, pain is more intense and violent according to the capacity of the patient, and the activity and impression of the agent: thus in the body those parts that are of the quickest

and most tender sense, are most receptive of pain; and when sharp and piercing humours fall upon them, are vehemently affected: how great shall be the punishment, when the entire man the soul and body are prepared to be most capable of torment, and infinite power inflicts it? "Weeping and gnashing of teeth," extreme sorrow, and extreme rage, are the characters of damnation. O doleful state beyond all possible expression!

3. It is a *perpetual reward*: it is the issue of "Eternal judgment:" the sentence is fixed and unalterable for ever. The "Saints shall ever be with the Lord," whose presence is the living fountain of felicity. Their bodies shall be endowed with a celestial unfading beauty and vigour becoming the glorious quality of the sons of God: their souls shall for ever be satisfied with the sight of his glory, and ravished with the fruition of his love. There is no defect in that blessed state, and no danger of losing it. The love of God towards his elect vessels of mercy is as unchangeable as his nature; and the divine beauty fixes the flame of their pure affections upon the Deity: they enjoy an everlasting communion with him. Eternity crowns and consummates their happiness.

The wicked are excommunicated from the beatifical presence of God, and the joyful society of the saints for ever. They are imprisoned in hell during the displeasure of the immortal King, who is inflexibly angry, and irreconcileable for ever. In the present state violent pains or passions extinguish life, as a fierce fire devours the matter that feeds it: the natural body could not endure the torments of hell a moment, the frail tabernacle of flesh would presently be dissolved: but the divine power will uphold the damned in vivacity to feel the infernal torments. Here there are intermissions and pauses between the strokes of God's hand; even Pharaoh that proud rebel was indulged at times, to lead him to repentance: but there is an incessant perpetuity of torments: the obstinate sons of darkness are without ease or end of their misery.

IV. We are to consider the respective difference of the rewards, according to the actions of men in this life: and that with respect to the kinds whether good or evil, and the degrees of good and evil in them. He will then lay "Judgment to the line, and righteousness to the plummet, and bring every work to judgment, whether good or evil." Eccles. 12. 14. He will try

our good works inclusively, with our principles, and aims, and affections, wherein their spiritual value consists. He alone has exact scales to "weigh the spirits of men," a divine faculty to see the deepest seeds of their actions. When religious duties, when acts of charity and of any virtue are performed in obedience to God, to please and glorify him, they shall be rewarded accordingly: but when done from carnal motives, for our own reputation, our own interest or pleasure, the Judge will then declare, "I have not found your works full before me:" Rev. 3. 2. though never so specious and glittering in the eyes and esteem of men, though appearing with a great show of goodness, yet without the internal exercise of gracious affections that are the life of obedience, they are of no account in that day. According to the sincerity, zeal, and measure of our good works, the reward shall be: "He that sows sparingly, shall reap sparingly; and he that sows bountifully, shall reap bountifully." 2 Cor. 9. 6. This rule of judgment does not in the least imply that there is any desert of the reward in the best works of men: the scripture is most express, "That eternal life is the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord:" the kingdom of glory is infinitely more a gift than a reward.

As the predestination of saints to life is an act of sovereign mercy; so the glorification of them is an act of equally free mercy, without respect to any merit of ours: but the wise and holy Lawgiver dispenses the blessed reward according to the tenour of our good works: and as by the excellence of the reward he declares what value he sets upon our obedience; so by the exactness of our obedience we declare what value we set upon the reward.

The recompences of distributive justice shall be according to the evil works of men. All sins with the enhancing circumstances of guilt shall be brought to judgment; sins of omission; "I was an hungry, and you gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and you gave me no drink," shall be charged upon the reprobates by the Judge himself. "To him who knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is a sin." Jam. 4. 17. All sins of commission, "whether secret or open: God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ:" the sins concealed from the eye of the day, the light of the sun, and from the eye of the night, the light of a candle, shall then be made manifest: and all the no-

torious and infamous sins, "Lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatry, men shall give an account of to him, who is ready to judge the quick and the dead." 1 Pet. 4. 4, 5. Sins of thoughts and words, as well as of actions, shall then be remembered; the "vain thoughts that have lodged in the heart, and every idle word that hath been spoken by men, they shall give an account of in the day of judgment."

The degrees of punishment shall be correspondent to men's sins: how much "they have lived deliciously and presumptuously, so much sorrow and torment shall be given them." The more rebellious, outrageous, and obstinate sinners now are, the more fearful severities shall be their portion. "Those who know their master's will, and do it not, shall be beaten with many stripes."

The proceedings of that day shall be transacted by the Son of God in his glorified human nature, and suitable to the capacities of men that the justice of his sentence may be evident: therefore St. John, describing the process of the last judgment, relates, "I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and the dead were judged out of those things that were written in the books, according to their works." Rev. 20. 12.

The records of conscience shall then be opened, and all the sins of men, even those that are now obliterated and forgotten, shall then appear in so clear an impression, with all their aggravations, that the wicked will be inexcusable to themselves, and conscience will subscribe their condemnation. The Judge himself who knows all things will then unfold the registers of his omniscience, and publish their sins before the world. "Then shall the King say, I was hungry, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink:" and by just analogy we may infer he will charge sins of all kinds upon the wicked, of which they have been guilty, that the righteousness and reasonableness of his proceedings may appear: he will overcome when he judges, the condemned shall have nothing to reply, struck into silence and confusion: the saints and angels shall with admiration magnify his true and righteous judgments.

THE APPLICATION.

The doctrine of Christ's speedy coming to judgment, should be a powerful incentive to our most solemn and ready preparing for it. The affair is infinitely serious, it is our incomparable interest to secure the favour of the Supreme Judge: if we are cast in judgment, our misery is irrecoverable. There may be errors in human judgment, and other days of trial to review and alter the sentence; but the judgment of the last day is irrevocable. And is it a slight matter to be saved or damned for ever? "Then the children of this world are absolutely wiser than the children of light." But it is not possible for the mind of man, unless monstrously perverted, to conceive such a thought. From whence then is it, that the eternal judgment is so unconsidered, so unexpected, and unprepared for, by most of the world? "Should not the excellence of their Judge make sinners afraid?" His universal knowledge, "for all things are naked and open to him, with whom we have to do;" his immaculate holiness, "for he is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity without aversation;" his incorruptible justice "that will not spare the guilty;" his "eternal power" that can so easily and terribly revenge all wilful disobedience to his law, and has been so insolently contemned, all the perfections of his divine nature, and the bleeding sufferings of his human nature to purchase salvation so wretchedly neglected, will render their judgment fearful and intolerable. "What will they do in the day of visitation?" Isa. 10. 3. "Can their hearts endure, or their hands be strong in the day that he will deal with them?" Ezek. 22. 14. Can they think to mitigate his hot displeasure, when his clemency so often despised, will inflame his justice? All the mercies which they have so ungraciously abused, shall be produced in testimony of their rebellion, heightened with the most unworthy ingratitude: what consternation will seize the guilty, when ten thousand accusers shall rise up in judgment against them, and not one advocate appear for their defence? Methinks the hearing such terrible truths should make their ears tingle, and their hearts die within them, yet (O astonishing security!) though God speaks so loud by the voice of his ministers, and sometimes by his powerful providence, they are as deaf as ad-

ders; but let a carnal lust whisper within from their earthly part, they presently hear and are charmed. From whence is it that the eternal judgment, so sure as death, does not cause an extreme apprehension in unpardoned sinners? The next cause of this stupidity is, that they put the evil day at a remote distance, as the scorners said, "the vision is for many days:" Ezek. 12. 12. they study to be secure, and delay their preparations, presuming to have time enough before them. Vain men! how willingly do they deceive themselves? Can they be assured of the present life one hour? Some in their impure embraces, others at voluptuous feasts have been seized by divine justice: the day of death is equivalent to the day of judgment; for immediately after there is a final decision and actual disposing of men for ever.

That we may therefore be duly prepared, these directions are to be followed.

1. Let it be our special care to plant the belief of this great truth in our minds, and preserve it in its vigour, that we may feel its efficacy and influence in our hearts and lives. Customary believers, whose assent to divine truths is only from the prejudice of education, and the current opinions of others with whom they live, are as careless and secure as direct atheists: the substantial fruits of godliness and holiness spring from internal notions deeply established, and experimentally felt in the soul. The usual coldness in the duties of religion, and presumptuous boldness in sin, is because men have but a slight belief of their great account. But we have infallible assurance from the Judge himself: "Behold I come quickly: his throne is like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire," an emblem of his swift coming to judgment. The steadfast belief of this will arrest our vain thoughts, and control our vicious affections, and regulate our conversations. Faith is the principle of fear; and fear is a preventive passion, it engages the mind to consider with becoming seriousness, how "to escape the damnation of hell." Then we throughly believe this fundamental principle of religion, when the design and work of our lives is to be approved by our Judge.

2. Moderation both in the pleasures and business of the world is requisite, that we may with entire application of mind prepare to appear before our Judge. It is the awful caution of our

Saviour to his disciples, "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time, your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them, that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man." Luke 21. 34, 35. The universal snares that fasten men in security are sensual pleasures and worldly cares: they are natural and insinuating into our hearts. A dissolute voluptuous course is attended with a stupid neglect of God and the soul: and the indulging of the carnal appetites, though not in such vicious excesses, as the notoriously profane are guilty of, lessens the fear of caution, which is instrumental to make us serious and diligent, lest we be surprised in an unprepared state by the Judge of the world. The subtilty of satan is to be observed, he does not tempt men to take so deep a surfeit of pleasures as might cause a loathing of them, but gently feeds the voluptuous diseased appetites, knowing that a sensual life alienates the mind from a severe reflecting upon the state of their souls, and induces a deep forgetfulness of their accounts with God. From hence it is, that the danger wherein so many are of losing their souls for ever, is not perceived till their case be desperate.

Others are so involved in secular business, their minds are so overshaded with the cares of the world, that they are not at leisure to attend "to the one thing necessary," and can take no right aspect of the world to come. Their affections are stiff and settled in the earth, their thoughts are immersed in the affairs of this present life; they think it their discretion and duty to engage in the incessant prosecution of their worldly designs, and the devil takes this advantage to prevent in them the pity and care of their immortal souls: or if at any time serious desires are kindled in them of salvation, an inundation of worldly thoughts presently quenches them. Thus men perish by the abuse of lawful things. The flood broke in upon the old world whilst they "were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, buying and selling, and destroyed them all:" the last fire will devour the present world in the same dull incogitancy, and stupid neglect to prepare themselves for judgment. "As it was in the

days of Noah, so shall it be in the days of the Son of Man." Luke 17. 26. The sensual and worldly-minded are usually secure, and when they "shall say peace and safety, sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child," as surprisingly as irresistibly, "and they shall not escape." It is a divine and solemn warning, "Behold, I come as a thief in the night, blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments unspotted from the world, lest he be found naked without the robe" Rev. 16. 15. of holiness, and be exposed to confounding shame in the great day.

3. The frequent and serious trial of conscience with respect to our spiritual state, and the actions of our lives is requisite to our preparing ourselves for our last account: for there will be a manifestation of them in that day. The most never spend a serious hour in considering whether they "are translated from death to life." The rule of judgment is declared by St. John; "He that hath the Son, hath life: and he that hath not the Son, hath not life." The justification of our persons from the guilt of our sins, is wholly to be ascribed to the divine mercy upon the account of his most precious merits and mediation: and all the saving benefits purchased by his death are actually applied only to those who are united to him by an unfeigned lively faith. All the vital influences of his merits are derived from him to his members: "he is the head of the church and Saviour of the body." His most precious blood that was shed on the cross, must be "sprinkled on the conscience to purge it from dead works: the blood of sprinkling speaks better things than the blood of Abel." And the faith that is saving is not a mere assent in speculation to the doctrine of the gospel, but such a belief in the blessed Mediator of his reconciling us to God, as produces a superlative love to him, and by that love sincere and uniform obedience to his most holy laws. By faith we are justified from the guilt of sin, by works from the charge of hypocrisy, in that we have sincerely complied with the terms of the gospel, by receiving an entire Christ as our Lord and Saviour.

We can never with comfort appear before the righteous Lord, if we have not an interest in him as the "Lord our righteousness."

There are some of a moral temper and civil conversation that

finally miscarry, by their neglect of coming to Christ with earnest hunger and thirst after his righteousness, which alone can endure the trial of God's judgment-seat for our absolution: they have not such a conscious feeling of their undone condition by sin, as to make them earnestly seek for a remedy: the deceiver of souls insinuates into their secret thoughts, that they are safe enough, and shall stand in judgment, because they are not guilty of enormous crimes; they rarely feel the lashes of conscience, which those who rebel against the clear light do. But how fair soever the lives of men appear, such is the exact purity of the divine law, so many known and secret sins even the most circumspect are guilty of, that without an interest in the blessed Mediator, they will be cast in judgment for ever. It is therefore of infinite consequence to examine ourselves whether we are in a state of favour and acceptance with God: the jealousy of many holy and tender spirits suspends the comfortable judgment of conscience, and the vicious self-love of carnal persons suspends the condemning judgment of it.

Besides, the daily review of our actions is of excellent use to prepare us for our last account. Conscience is placed in our bosoms as a vigilant inspector and domestic Judge, to observe our actions, and compare them with the rule, and accordingly to censure or approve us: when we fail in our duty, and violate God's precepts, it should work upon the affections of grief and shame, and cause us earnestly to address to the throne of grace for pardon: and renew the application of the blood of Christ to our souls. According to the quality of our sins, our repentance should be more solemn and special, we should more severely judge ourselves that we may "not be judged by the Lord." This is very unpleasant work to carnal men: but it is the indispensable condition of obtaining pardoning mercy: it is the most congruous way of recovering sinners both for the honour of God, and our good, for the broken and contrite person will most prize the favour of God, and be most fearful of returning to sin. Indeed then our "Repentance is unto life," when the dominion of sin is subdued, and the way is forsaken. Now, the speedy coming of our Judge should recommend this severe repentance to us: it should excite conscience to the daily observation of our errors, then when sins are committed, we may be restless till we get them pardoned: though men may suppress and smother the

convictions of conscience at the present, yet it will shortly, like a fierce and terrible officer, take the guilty by the throat and command him to pay what he owes to divine justice. It is our wisdom to compare the bitterness of repentance with the torments of hell: repenting sorrow is for the cure of sin, the sorrow of hell is for the punishment of sinners for ever. "Repent, that your sins may be blotted out in the times of refreshment from the presence of the Lord."

4. The persuasion of this doctrine is an excellent means to obtain a calm and contented frame of spirit in every state: for if we consider within a little while all civil distinctions of high and low, rich and poor, shall be at an end, and only the moral distinctions of holy and unholy, righteous and unrighteous, shall remain, that all must stand in an equal line before the judgment-seat of Christ, to receive eternal recompences, how will it vilify this world in our esteem, and consequently make a mean and low condition tolerable to us? It is related of Julius Cæsar, that being in a storm at sea, he was fain to strip himself naked and swim for his life, carrying in one hand his commentaries written by himself of his military actions: within a short time we must be divested of all the external circumstances of the present life, riches, honours, dignities, and of the garment of our flesh, and our naked souls shall only carry with them the book of conscience, wherein all our actions are recorded with our own hands, into that vast eternity before us: this should make us more indifferent what our present state is, that we must shortly leave, and very solicitous to order our conversation so as to be accepted of our Judge.

Particularly it should render the praise or dispraise of men a very small matter to us. Within a little while we shall only have to do with God, depend entirely upon him, and according as his sentence shall be favourable or fatal, must be determined for ever; how reasonable then is it in comparison of his judgment to disvalue the contingent opinions of men, who raise or depress our names according to their fancies and passions, and to be satisfied in God's approbation.

5. The consideration of this point should encourage us joyfully to endure reproach or violence for the testimony of divine truth, to suffer for righteousness-sake: for, as the apostle comforts the suffering christians, "Within a little while, he that

shall come will come, and will not tarry;" and will bestow an excellent reward in heaven upon his faithful servants. This, duly considered, will inspire not only patience, but divine joy in the saints in their most afflicted state for the name of Christ.

6. The consideration of this great truth should regulate our deportment towards all men, with sincerity, equity, benignity, and clemency. It is the apostle's chosen argument, "Let no man go beyond, or defraud his brother in any matter; because the Lord is the avenger of all such." 1 Thes. 4. 6. "Let your moderation be known to all men, the Lord is at hand." Phil. 4. 5.

To sum up all: let us with entire application of soul, and zealous endeavours strive to be approved by our Judge. "We labour," saith the apostle, "whether present or absent, to be accepted by him." 2 Cor. 5. 9. The certain rules of pleasing him, are to imitate his example, and obey his precepts. He will be a lamb to all who are like him in innocence, patience, and purity. He "went about doing good: let us do good to all, especially to the household of faith." To use an estate only for mean ends, our temporal conveniences, much more to abuse and pervert it, to foment pride and luxury, will make our accounts to be uncomfortable, and grievous: but to be "liberal and rich in good works," is the infallible way to obtain a rich reward. He forgave his cruel and unrighteous enemies; his dying prayer mixed with his precious blood was to reconcile God to those who shed it; and our absolution in his judgment is suspended upon this indispensable condition, that from the heart we forgive even the most injurious offences, and violent provocations from others. An unforgiving temper, like a millstone fastened about the neck, will sink us into unfathomed misery. He that is stiff and irreconcileable, either never seriously considers his own numerous sins, or never received God's pardoning mercy.

Let us uniformly obey the commands of Christ. We must stoop to his power as our Judge; "As I live saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God;" it is our wisdom therefore to yield obedience to his authority as our Lawgiver. "He is the author of eternal salvation to all who obey him."

Let us faithfully improve all our talents, all the means and advantages to serve and glorify him, for the account will be strict, and the reward infinite. Briefly, let us learn this point of wisdom of our spiritual enemy, who, because his "time is short," is more active and vigilant to do mischief; so considering our opportunity of doing good is short, and the omission irreparable, "Let us with zealous diligence always abound in the work of the Lord, knowing that our labour shall not be in vain in the Lord." 1 Cor. 15. 58. O that men were wise to consider their mortality and immortality: to do these things now, which in the last and great day they shall wish they had done.

I shall now, as the present occasion directs, speak of the deceased Mr. Benjamin Ashurst, of whose goodness there are very valuable testimonies. He had the felicity to be instructed and ordered in his early and obsequious age by a wise and holy Father: and as usually the gracious and vicious habits of the first age are transfused into the next, so his succeeding life was correspondent to his education. There is a fit resemblance between the natural culture of the earth and the moral of our minds: three things are requisite to make the earth fruitful, a good soil, good culture, and good seed; so by analogy, that education may be successful, a well-disposed nature, an understanding and good instructor, and the precepts of religion and virtue are necessary. All these concurred in the present subject. Some by a rare privilege are exempted from those tyrannous passions that so frequently disorder the lives of men; and in their childhood are of such mild and gentle spirits, so receptive of virtuous impressions, that at the sight of their dispositions and carriage we may have a conjecture of the felicity of the innocent state, of which one ray, or rather shadow, is so amiable. With such a happy temper God was pleased to endow our deceased friend: his spirit was humble, modest, gentle and complying with the counsels of his gracious Father, who with tender care led him in the way to heaven. When he was grown up to the age of vanity, he was preserved from youthful lusts: his conversation was unstained: he was not swelled with pride, nor ruffled with passion, nor disordered with excess. And as to a judicious eye, no spectacle is more deformed than an old man in whom the vices of youth are notorious, levity of mind, vehemence of passions, and vanity in

conversation: so on the contrary, there is not a more amiable sight, than a young man in whom the virtues of age are conspicuous; a staid mind, temperate desires, a composed deportment: and it were happy for the world if foolish old men were as rare to be found, as wise young men.

This praiseworthy person, when fit to enter a particular calling, was placed in the family of a Turkey merchant: there his behaviour was so religious and serious, that it was said of him by some that observed his actions, that he would be a merchant for heaven. He after some time went to Smyrna, and preserved his integrity and purity in the midst of temptations: where many by vicious excesses disparage the sanctity of the christian religion professed by them, he adorned it by the sobriety of his conversation. He returned to England after some years spent beyond sea, and persevered in his christian course, serious and solemn in his carriage, and ready to do good to those that wanted supplies from relieving charity. A few years after his return, he fell into a dying consumption that quickly put a period to his days. In his languishing disease he expressed an humble quiet submission to the divine disposal: he was silent from murmuring, but not from prayer, which he performed with solemn reverence to the Lord of life and death even in his weakness. When the hour of his departure was come, he calmly rendered his soul to his faithful Creator. There is just cause of sorrow that one in the flower of his age, of such hopes, should so suddenly wither and return to dust: if one old in years and vices, a corrupter of others by his contagious example die, the world is well rid of him: if a good man 'comes to the grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn comes in his season,' there is cause of thanksgiving, that he was so long a blessing to the world: but when a young saint dies, that might according to expectation have long glorified God upon the earth, and been a happy instrument of doing good, we should pay our tributary tears, and have a due and tender sense of the general loss. Yet those who are most nearly concerned, and mournfully affected, should quiet their troubled thoughts by considering the unaccountable will of God, nay, comfort their sad dejected spirits, by considering, that he has lived long enough in the present world, who by dying arrives to perfection and felicity.

A

FUNERAL SERMON

ON THE DEATH

OF

DR. WILLIAM BATES,

BY

JOHN HOWE.

TO THE RIGHT NOBLE

WILLIAM,

Duke, and Earl of Bedford; Marquis of Tavistock, Lord Russel, Baron Russel of Thornhaugh, Lord Lieutenant of the Counties of Middlesex, Bedford, and Cambridge; Knight of the most Noble Order of the Garter; and, one of His Majesty's most Honourable Privy Council.

May it please your Grace,

THE peculiar, and just respect which your Grace hath long had, for the worthy person, whose much lamented decease, occasioned the following discourse, easily induced me to believe, it would not offend your Grace, that your illustrious name is prefixed to it.

As it also was the sense of his mournful relict, that it could be no less than your Grace's right, such a memorial should be extant,

of the favourable aspects, wherewith you have been pleased to honour this her so dear relative.

Nor can it be unsuitable to the noble amplitude, of your truly great mind, that it should be told the world, you knew how to value true worth, wheresoever you find it. Not confining your respects, to any party; or distinguishing men, by any, when especially, the parties themselves, are distinguished by marks, which they who wear them, count indifferent, and, which, therefore, must be understood to make men, neither better, nor worse.

And if they who wear them not, count otherwise; though they should be mistaken in their judgment, after their having endeavoured to the uttermost, to be rightly informed, their sincerity, accompanied, and evidenced, by great self-denial, must, in the account of so equal, and candid a judge, as your Grace, far outweigh, so light a mistake, in so small matters.

Such differences will be easily tolerable, where there is that mutual charity, as neither to think a different judgment, to be bribed with dignities, and emoluments, on the one hand; nor to be perverted, by humour and affectation of singularity, on the other.

The Reverend Doctor's great candour, and moderation, in reference to the things, wherein he hath been constrained to differ, from many excellent persons; and his remoteness from any disposition, to censure them from whom he differed, have been these many years conspicuous to all that knew him.

The apprehension having been deeply inwrought into the temper of his mind, that the things, wherein only, it could be possible for truly good men to differ, must be but trifles, in comparison of the much greater things, wherein it was impossible for them, not to agree.

And I no way doubt, but the things for which your Grace most deservedly valued, this excellent person, were such, as have in them, an inherent, and immutable goodness; not varying with times, or the changeable posture of secular affairs; but which must be the same, in all times. Nor appropriate to persons of this or that denomination, but that may be common, to persons sincerely good, of any denomination whatsoever.

Whereupon, the testimony your Grace hath, from time to time, given, of your value of him, on such an account, must have redounded to yourself; have reflected true honour on your own name; shown your discerning judgment

of persons and things; and entitled you to his prayers; which, I hope, have been available, to the drawing down of blessings, on yourself, and your noble family.

Unto whose, must his prayers also be added, for the same purposes; who is, with the greatest sincerity, and under many obligations,

Your Grace's most Obedient,

and most Humble Servant,

JOHN HOWE.

A

SERMON, &c.

IT is grievous to me to tell you, in whose room and stead I do now stand, in this place this day.

Nor do I need; you can tell yourselves, observing the stated courses and alternations, held in this lecture, that if the counsels of heaven had agreed with our desires and hopes on earth; this is the day, this is the hour, wherein you had again seen the face, and heard the voice of that excellent servant of Christ, whom we now lament as lost to us, and dead out of the world: not absolutely dead. For God, who is his God for ever and ever, is not the God of the dead, but of the living. Dying out of this world, he was born into the other.

But in that sense wherein he is dead to us, and this world of ours, what remains? But that we agree to say, Let us die with him."

And these are the words, which if God will graciously afford us his help and presence, we may fruitfully entertain ourselves with, upon this sad occasion at this time; you will find them in—

JOHN XI. 16.

Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

THE history to which these words belong, contains so illustrious, and instructive an instance of the Redeemer's power over

both worlds, and so plainly shows, that he could, at his pleasure, translate men out of the one into the other, as might best serve the proper purposes of his redemption, that it can never be unseasonable to us to consider it, who are always subject to the same power. And it is very especially seasonable at this time, when we have reason enough to re-consider his late use of this power, in another kind, less grateful to us, but not less wise, or just in itself; not the recalling of one, out of the other world into this, but the calling away of one, out of this world into the other, the translating of this excellent person from among us, whose longer abode here had been highly desirable, as his removal is most bitterly grievous, and must have been intolerable, were it not that though this is not the same act, it is an act of that same power over lives, which in all its exertions, we are always to behold, with the same profound, adoring silence, and disposition of mind, to receive instruction from it, whether it be pleasing to us, or displeasing. I will make no apology for my recalling your thoughts, so long after to this sad theme. Our mutual endearedness, his condescending affection to me, and my reverential affection to him, were so generally known to those that knew either of us, that it might be expected I should take some public notice of this severing stroke; and I may suppose my circumstances to be so known, that it is obvious to every one to understand I could do it no sooner.

It will not be unuseful, to make some brief reflection, upon this miraculous work of our Lord, and thence return to the special subject, which I desire your thoughts may be fixed upon, as mine have been. It was the most memorable of all our Lord's works of this kind, yet not mentioned by the other evangelists; lest, as is supposed, it should revive the Jewish malice against Lazarus; who, as Epiphanius tells us, was reported to have lived thirty years after, within which time the others had all writ, whereas this evangelist wrote not, till after his final decease. It was wrought for the same great end, for which all his wonderful works were done, and written, generally, for the glory of God, as is intimated, ver. 4. and particularly, as this evangelist tells us, chap. 20. 20, 21. "That we might believe that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God;" and that believing we might "have life through his name." And though they all had this design; this, toward the end of his course, seems meant

for the last, and conclusive, stroke, having a brighter, and more conspicuous appearance of the divine glory in it, for a fuller, and more convictive, demonstration, that he was the Son of God, and the Messias, as he gave himself out to be. And all things were designed in the aptest subserviency hereto; that, once for all, this long disputed point might be put out of all doubt.

For this end it is ordered, that Lazarus should at this time fall sick. Nothing more appeared to human prospect, but that the disease befel him according to the common course of natural causes: but says our Lord, "This sickness is not unto death;" viz. as the final and permanent event, or design of it; "but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby," ver. 4. God's counsels lie deep, not obvious to common view. When such a servant of God is fallen sick, we know not what he intends to bring out of it. His glory, may in his own way, and time, so much the more brightly shine forth, though we yet distinctly know not when, or how. Upon this account, when our Lord not only heard of Lazarus' sickness, but knew he was dead, he yet defers two days, even though he knew him to have then been at least two days dead before: so that when he now comes to the place "he finds him to have lain four days in the grave;" ver. 17. he resolves to give so much the greater scope, and advantage, to the glory of the divine power, to display and evidence itself. He defers till now death, and the grave, were in full dominion, that his conquest might be the more glorious. He had before raised some from death, none from the grave. The lamenting relatives were now in despair: the thoughts of restitution were quite laid aside. All their hopes were buried with the deceased in the same grave, as may be collected from sundry following verses.

In the like despair, not long after, were the mournful disciples, concerning their not only deceased, but entombed Lord, unto whose surprising resurrection, this seems a designed prelude, the bereaved relations, and their comforters were now all abandoned to sorrow, and drenched in tears. And with the rest we are told, ver. 35. that "Jesus wept." But why was this? Was it that he knew not his own mind, or distrusted his own power? He had given sufficient intimation of his own purpose, and of the foresight he had of the certain, glorious issue, of this gloomy dark providence. It is evident therefore for what he

wept not. It is not so obvious to conclude for what he wept. It is most unworthy of him to suppose his was feigned sorrow, or that he shed hypocritical tears. Nor was this the only instance of his weeping; no, no, he was "a man of sorrow, acquainted with griefs;" and had always in view, sufficient cause of real soul-trouble, as this is called, ver. 33. "He groaned in Spirit and was troubled;" it must be, by the contexture of the evangelical history, near the time of his weeping over Jerusalem, when his soul was filled and taken up with sad and mournful themes.

But who can tell what thoughts lay deep in that large and comprehensive mind! We are sure, though he wept with the rest, that it was not as they wept, nor from the same motives. His thoughts were not as their thoughts, but as far wider, and higher, as the heavens are than the earth. We have no way to know what his thoughts were, we know what they might be. He saw not Jerusalem only, but all this world buried in sin and death. He could not as the second Adam be, "the resurrection and the life," as he speaks, ver. 25. without beholding, with a compassionate heart, the impurities, and miseries, wherewith it was deluged by the first. And he had now enough in view, to discompose his pure mind, intent upon high and great things; that when his business into this world was to prepare men for another; and, when they were fit, to translate them thither: even they that professed to believe on him, should no more understand him; that his kind, and great design should be no more grateful to them, and so slowly enter into their minds and hearts, that when they saw one such translation, it should so much displease them, and they so little relish it, as to be all in tears and lamentations thereupon; and thereby discover such an unlikeness of heart and spirit to this present world, and state of things, as to prefer the enjoyment of a friend on earth, before all the glories of the heavenly state; so might their immoderate weeping some way cause his tears. But when he expressed his trouble by groans, and tears, he suppressed the causes of it, and went on to his present intended work. In order hereto, ver. 39. he commands the grave-stone to be removed; neglecting the objection, ver. 39. ["by this time he stinks."]

He observed, with a compassionate indulgence, the diffidence, which he meant speedily to refute. Nor, because we also are

too prone to prescribe limits to the divine power, ought we, for his indulgence, to be the less severe to ourselves. Forgetting the transcendency of that power, we think this or that strange, and scarce possible to be done, because we too lightly, consider the equal, or greater, strangeness, of what we see is done. We count things easy, that are by use become familiar to our senses, and apprehend we have the notion of them clear, and how they can come to be as they are; not having examined, or inquired, whether our apprehensions were right, and congruous, or not. Things that have not struck our sense, making ourselves, and even our sense, the measure, we count impossible, and inconceivable.

By the course of nature, our sense hath told us, a body so long in the grave, must be putrid, and stink. But who settled that course of nature? If we ascend not to the original cause, the fixation of that course is as admirable and unaccountable; if we do, a departure from it is as easy. What can the wisest philosophers conceive of the difference between an offensive smell, and a grateful; but the different disposition, or texture of the particles of matter, in relation to the *sensorium*, or the receptive organ? When, what that different disposition is, remains altogether unapprehensible, and what no man can tell. We go away well satisfied concerning what we see happens every day, because we never inquire how things came to be as they are; when what we have not known to come to pass, though not more difficult, we say, can never be. Otherwise we should think it no more admirable, or difficult, to reduce in a moment, the parts of matter to such a *situs*, as that they should give no offence to the sense of smelling, though before they did, than it was, to the same power, so to dispose, that, in one sort of location, they should give that offence, in another, they should not, and perhaps, in a third, highly gratify and please! Thousands of like instances might be given, but this comes now in our way.

The world is full of miracles; we are compassed about with such, and are such. There is, it is true, a peculiar notion of them, as necessary as they are themselves; signifying, not what is done by a greater power, but less usual. As such, the use, and need of them only argues the infirmity of our minds, sunk into earth and sense, and grown somnolent; whence they need to be roused, by surprising, and uncommon things; and brought

to consider, that he only, who could fix and settle the so steady course of nature, could alter it, and make it forsake its wonted tract: which he must always be supposed to do, for some very weighty, important end, and reason. So absolute power, being ever in strict connexion with the most perfect wisdom, and therefore claiming to be the most earnestly attended to, and considered the more deeply. To that power that could create a man, it was equally easy to perfume a grave; or to make a new man spring up out of it, in fresh strength, someliness, and vigour. To recompose the disordered parts of a body turning to dust, and refit it, for the union, and use of the returning soul. This he will not do often, but he saw a just and valuable reason for his doing it at this time.

He was now to give, and leave behind him, a full conclusive demonstration, once for all, of his being the Son of God, by whom the worlds were made. And the Christ, or Messiah (the great controverted point of that time) which ver. 5. is called, "Glorifying the Son;" who for asserting this, was calumniated as an impostor and "deceiver of the people." He was to give a specimen of his power, as such, over universal nature, and that he could at pleasure control, and countermand the most established law of it. All things being put under that notion, as he was the Christ, into "his hands," John 13. 3. and "all power given him, both in heaven and earth," Mat. 28. 18. so as that, "by him, all things must consist," Col. 1. 17. A power he was to use, being gradually, and at last, perfectly, "to make all things new." Rev. 21. 5. He was to make good his own title, "I am the resurrection and the life," Ver. 25. which he assumes in this context; to let it be seen he was no vain pretender; and that it was no vain faith that should be placed upon him, in this respect; but that what he should now do, as to one, he was able equally to do, in the fit season for every one, when "all that are in their graves should hear his voice." Chap. 5. 28. He was to show forth a resemblance of that more peculiar act, of his most graciously undertaken office, to be a spring of life to souls morally dead, viz. "in trespasses and sins." Eph. 2. 1. To give this divine, and most noble kind of life! to do that, most merciful, and most godlike work! He was to take away all cause or pretence for despair, but that, whereas a death was to pass upon himself, and upon

his Church on Earth, both he himself, and it, "with his dead body, should arise. Isa. 26. 19. Therefore he utters that mighty commanding voice, at which rocks and mountains tremble, and shiver, and which all the powers of nature must obey; "Lazarus come forth!" and he comes forth. These things we now lightly touch, hoping they may be of further use to us afterwards.* We expect not the like thing in our present mournful case; but we expect greater things; for which we are to await our Lord's season.

In the mean time, let us return and consider, what is overtured in the case the text refers to, when, as to any such remedy, the mourning friends expected as little as we. Here was a worthy good man gone. A friend of Christ, and of his friends. Christianity gives no man a terrestrial immortality. Christians, even the best of them, must die as well as other men. This was a matter taken to heart by Christ himself, as we have seen, in a way becoming, and worthy of him. His disciples also are deeply concerned, and they consider, and discourse it, their way. One of them, Thomas, who also was called Didymus (wherein is no other mystery, than that his name is first given us in Hebrew, then in Greek, as is not unexampled elsewhere) proposes, as you have heard; "Let us also go, that we may die with him." Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. There was, no doubt, an abounding fulness of sense, in this good man's soul, from whence these words did proceed. And it might be two-fold: either, 1. Good and commendable, fit for our imitation, and whereto the temper of our spirits should be conform. 2. Faulty and reprehensible; such, as against which, we should arm and fortify ourselves. Such mixtures are not to be thought strange. It is little to be expected, that in what is hastily said, by the best on earth, on an occasion apt to stir passions, there should be nothing but pure breathings of heavenly wisdom, and goodness. Under the for-

* Where Lazarus' soul had been in the mean time, was too light a matter, to weigh against these mighty things our Lord was intent upon. His concerns were to yield and bow to his Lord and Master's great designs: he could not be unfitter for his own business afterwards, than the apostle in the like case (for ought that he himself knew) was for his. The consideration of this matter did not divert our Lord Christ, from what he was intent upon, nor let it divert us, but as a lighter matter, be left for the exercise of lighter minds.

mer head, we shall speak of divers things which we cannot, indeed, be sure were the explicit, distinct sense of this good man, at this time, but which might be; and should be ours on a like occasion. Which well agree with christian principles, and which his words serve aptly enough to express; as,

1. A firm belief of a future state. Did this good man only desire to partake with the other in death, and no more? Did his wish terminate here? Can we apprehend any thing good, or desirable, in mere death, that one would covet to share in, with another? Or which one would be loath he should engross alone? Nor could Thomas mean this, having heard that Lazarus was already dead. It cannot be thought, that one who had been some years in immediate attendance upon the Son of God, the Lord from heaven, and under his instructions, and who had so much opportunity to observe, that his whole design lay for another world; and that he never encouraged his followers to expect from him any advantages, above others, in this world, but forewarned them of troubles, and sufferings, to which they would be always liable from it, and that they must be content to await for their rewards in another state. It is not to be thought that such a one was an infidel in reference to any such state: or that he thought his friend extinct, by dying: or that when he wished to be with him, he wished to be no where, or nothing.

2. A mind loose, and disengaged from this present world. He could be intent upon no great designs for this earth, who with the next that leaves it, was willing to go too.

3. Easy, placid thoughts of dying. He looked upon death as no such frightful thing: that could so familiarly, and off-hand, say, when he thought of such a one's dying; come, let's go, and die with him.

4. A distinguishing judgment concerning the states of men hereafter, remote from thinking it fares with all alike, in the other world; but well informed, that it could only be ill, with ill men; and well only, with the good. A settled persuasion of a judgment to come. According to declared rules of which judgment, this present judgment is formed. That they who "continue in a course of well-doing, shall have eternal life; evil-doers, indignation and wrath." Rom. 2. 7, 8. This wish could not be thought less caution than his, who says with distinction, "Let me die the death of the righteous." Num. 23. 10. It must be

far from him to be content, "God should gather his soul with sinners." Ps. 26. 9. The future state was, no doubt, considered as a state of separation between men and men. He could not covet to be associated with good and bad, promiscuously, and at random.

5. A rationally charitable opinion, and estimate, that he was sincerely good, and happy; with whom he coveted to be united in death. Such an opinion, is all that is here requisite. Faith it cannot be, for the object is not a revealed thing. Knowledge it is not, for we have no medium to know it by. That we have more reason to think this, than the contrary, of such a one, is sufficient, and that this should be implied, in this wish, is necessary. Here was an apprehension, of an happy state, the other was passed into. That saying, *Sit anima mea cum philosphis*, implied, that he who said it, thought their state better, than some other men's. And Thomas could not but have sufficient reason, for his apprehension of Lazarus' sincerity, so as not to doubt of his felicity. His house, he observed, was our Lord's resort. Here he was received gladly, by him, and his good sisters. His doctrine, we have cause to think, he entertained as well as himself, and himself, for his doctrine's sake. The peculiar affection our Lord had for him, observed by the domestics, that say, "He whom thou lovest is sick," ver. 3. noted by the Jews, with a "behold how he loved him," ver. 36, could leave Thomas no ground of doubt, but he was a sincere believer on the Son of God, and now, in a blessed state: so are christians, visibly such, to esteem one another, and accordingly to have communion with one another, in grace; and hope, and wish for it, in glory. A temper, now, very alien from too many, that go under that name; who make not the great substantials of Christianity the measure of their present and hoped communion, but devised additions of their own; or rather, not what they add to, but substitute in the stead, of faith, mercy, and the love of God; and license themselves, to ascend the throne, usurp the seat of judgment, and boldly damn all them, who are not of their own complexion, and party; and that cannot so far conform to their humours, passions, prejudices, and interested inclinations, as to say, and act in every thing, just as they do.

6. A most ardent, and most generous love to such good men, upon that just, and reasonable apprehension of them. For what

love can be greater? How can one more highly express love to any man, than by a declared willingness to live, and die with him; and simply to die, when he can no longer live with him. Love raised to this pitch is stronger than death. Heathen story is not without some instances, of some. whom no dread of death could sever from each other; but that they have been willing, as the case should require, to die with, or to die for, another. To be either each others companions, or substitutes in death. The tyrant Dionysius having sentenced to death one of that admirable pair, Damon and Pythias, and fixed the day of execution, the condemned person petitioned for leave to be absent upon important occasions; in that interval, his friend offering himself, as his sponsor, to die for him, if he returned not by the appointed day. He returning punctually with all diligence, knowing his friend's life to be, otherwise in hazard; the tyrant, in great admiration of their mutual love and fidelity, pardons the condemned, and requests of them both, that they would admit him, as a third person, into society of their friendship. What they tell us of divers others, I mention not, whom no death could sever: whom dangers did more closely unite.

Such as are conjoined in the same common cause, their mutual love, mutually animates them, even to face death; because each finds the other will not flinch, or leave him in danger alone. "Many waxed bold by the apostle's bonds," Phil. 1. 14. when they could not but be thought bonds of death. No doubt, because he was dear to them. So that they were willing, even to run into the same bonds, because he was bound by them. Even in this sense, love casts out fear. And what could more either express his own love, or tend to inflame other men's, than when that great apostle bespeaks the christians of that time, as having his life bound up in theirs? "I live if ye stand fast" 1 Thes. 3. 8. that he was "ready to impart, with the gospel, even his own soul to them, because they were dear to him." Chap. 2. 8. And that "they were in his heart to live and die with them. 2 Cor. 7. 3. There seemed to be but one life, common to him and them. When there are such unions, that each, is to the other, an *alter ego*, another self; and anothers soul, is to a man as half his own; as he pathetically phrases it.* Here is the height of affection! And that affection mutu-

* Hor.

ally heightens each others courage, and is a continual and reciprocated source of a generous magnanimity, springing from the one, into the others breast; while they perceive in one another, a mutual vying, who shall the more adventurously rush upon death, for, the conjunction with, the other.

This seems not alien from the temper of Thomas' mind in his uttering of these words. For when our Lord proposed going into Judea, other of the disciples objecting that the Jews had there lately sought to kill him; he, when he understood Lazarus was dead, whom he knew to be a friend to that cause, though he died not for it; come, says he, let us now fear no death, let us rush, in *media arma*, throw ourselves into the midst of death, and there breathe forth our souls, full of love, to God, and Christ, and him, and one another; even upon the same spot, where this friend of our Lord, and our common cause and interest, breathed forth his. These noble principles, fortitude and love, might have made two distinct heads of discourse; but they are so complicated, and interwoven with one another, that they were scarce to be considered apart. And this complication, these words more than intimate.—"That their hearts may be comforted" (or incited, and stirred up, as the word there used signifies) "being knit together in love." Col. 2. 2.

7. A lively apprehension of the large, abounding diffusion of the divine fulness; sufficiently able to replenish, and satisfy, all that shall be prepared to partake in it. That this good man's eye was upon somewhat else, than mere death, and that he coveted not to die, for dying sake, must be out of doubt with us. He certainly aimed at a blessed state after death. And who can suppose his mind void of that so common notion, that the blessedness of souls must lie in God? But this could not be all. The faint, spiritless, notion, of a felicity to be enjoyed in God, could signify little to the present purpose. Here must be a lively, gustful apprehension of it too. For here is intervening death to be gone through. And he expresses himself willing to attempt this difficult pass. "Let us go—that we may die—" How few do you know, or converse with, that are without this notion, that God is the blessedness of souls? Or that assent not to it as soon as they hear it? Yet how few do you know, that are willing to die, to enjoy him? no, no, they are generally willing, rather to "eat the dust of the earth," and

"feed upon ashes," thousands of years, than go to God for a better portion! Notwithstanding their dead, spiritless, inefficacious notion of a divine heavenly felicity, they had rather want it. A blessedness not to be had on earth, or that must come by dying! They bless themselves from such a blessedness! It is plain then, there must be more than a dead notion, to overcome their aversion to dying. And what can be that more? It is as plain, it must be a vivid apprehension of such a blessedness in God, after death. And that imports two things.

(1.) A divine faith of it. It must be the apprehension of faith, and of a divine faith. Almost every one pretends to believe it; but it is generally, with an human faith only. Because their parents, or preachers, or the common voice of the country, hath told them so. A divine faith, is full of divine life, and vigour. The substance and evidence of what is believed. The soul being overpowered into this belief by the majesty, and authority of the great God revealing it, and the awfulness of his testimony; the "word of God" revealing this, as other portions of sacred truth, works effectually in them that so believe it: that is, that "receive it not as the word of man, but as the word of God." 1 Thes. 2. 13. They that live in the hope of eternal life, which "God that cannot lie hath promised," Tit. 1. 2. would break through a thousand deaths to obtain it. This is more than a spiritless notion. And

(2.) Such a lively apprehension hath in it somewhat of a present sense, and foretaste of that blessedness. An heaven begun. Which is of the same kind with their future heaven. They have the "kingdom of God," in them, "which stands in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Rom. 14. 17. Such an earnest speaks their own right, while they are yet sensible of the great imperfection of their present state. They are therefore willing to die, that they may be made perfect. They now know by taste what it is to enjoy God. "O taste and see that God is good! Ps. 34. A mere notion informs us not enough, so as to actuate our minds what that means. Notwithstanding it, the carnal mind can frame no distinct heart-moving thought of felicity; other, or more grateful, than the relishes of meat and drink, or the satisfaction of some, or other, mean, or carnalized appetite. They that have tasted somewhat of an higher kind, long for more, and most of all that most perfect fruition, which they must pass through death to attain.

We will not suppose this good man to have been destitute, of such a faith, and of such tastes, of the heavenly felicity. And as, hereby he was not without a lively apprehension, of the kind and nature of it, so we must suppose him, to have a like apprehension. O the large, copious, abounding, and diffusive fulness of it. Whereof his words give some intimation. "Let us go, and die with him." He doubted not of a sufficiently extensive communion in this blessedness. As if it had been said, There is enough for him, and us all. And such an apprehension, we all ought to have, of the blessedness of the heavenly state, into which we are to be introduced by death, that it is enough for all that can be in any possibility to partake in it. So that the abounding plenitude of no one's portion, can be any diminution to anothers. The kind and nature of material, sensible good, hath a remarkable, and most agreeable affinity to what is said (and what upon very strict inquiry, one knows not how, not to say) of matter itself, that it is perpetually divisible; but so, as that every part, and particle, is still less and less. Whereupon it cannot but be, that whatsoever any enjoy of terrene good, so much is detracted from the rest. Of intellectual, spiritual good, knowledge, wisdom, grace, glory, the case is quite different. Let any possess never so much, it nothing diminishes anothers possession, in the same kind. If another man be never so wise, good, and happy, it takes nothing from me, I may be as wise, good, and happy. At least, that hinders not, but I may.

How pleasant a contemplation is this! that in the vast, and numberless, regions of light, bliss, and glory, the blessed inhabitants are all drawing from the same fountain; solacing themselves in the "fulness of joy," drinking in from those "rivers of pleasure, that flow from the divine presence, for evermore! All deriving, unto satiety, from that fulness, "that filleth all in all.

8. Preference of the society with holy ones, in the heavenly state, above any to be enjoyed on earth. The words, as to their most obvious sense, seem to be full of this. With whom I would live, with him I would die. Is not this our common sense? Not that we can apprehend any thing in the very act, or article of dying, that can make dying with one, more desirable, than with another; but it must be meant, of what is to follow.

We would not have death to part us. We would enjoy one another, after death; but so, as we did not before. It is very probable, our Lord, and his disciples, had formerly enjoyed pleasant hours with Lazarus, in his own house. But why doth Thomas, therefore, desire they might die, to be with him? Excepting him, he might still have enjoyed the same society on earth, and of many other christian friends besides. But we see his proposal concerned not himself only. It is, "Let us go die with him." He reckoned they should all die, and be with him together. And that the state they should then be in, would have, in point of society, and conversation, such advantages, above what their present state afforded, as were worth dying for.

And how can we but apprehend the vast difference? Whatever delight good men, on earth, have had in one anothers society, they must, then, be better company than ever. How hard is it now, to communicate our sentiments! We know not what our ways of converse shall hereafter be, but we know that such words as we now use, are very slow, defective *media* of conveying, our minds and sense, to one another. What a difficulty do we now find, if we apprehend a thing clearly ourselves, to make another master of our notion? What circumlocutions do we need! What explications, to make another understand our meaning! And then those explications need further explication! And so we run ourselves into new difficulties, and entangle one another more, and more. Most of our controversies arise from our mistaking one anothers sense; though too often those mistakes are wilful with them who love strife more than truth: and it is industriously endeavoured, to pervert each others words, and put senses upon them quite besides, or against our true intent. But if we speak and hear with the greatest candour, and sincerity that is possible, we are frequently not understood aright, either through the unskilfulness of him that speaks, to choose the aptest words, and forms of speech, or thattentiveness, incapacity, and dulness, in them that hear: frequently from both together. Hence is the conversation of christians so little edifying, though their discourse of useful subjects, which, God knows, there is little of amongst us! Though much more than is commonly apprehended, proceeds from want of love, that should let us into one anothers minds, and hearts.

Our very sermons, when we study to make important things as plain as we can, are lost upon the most. Though here we see the advantage of a people's having a love to their minister, which is a mighty orator within themselves, and will make them endeavour to take in his heart, and soul; as on his part, his love to them will make him willing, as we heard from the apostle, to "impart, with the gospel, his own soul." 1 Thes. 2. 8. But as to christian converse in this our present state, besides the difficulty of understanding one another, all, even of them who have great treasures of knowledge in them, are not alike conversable, and communicative, nor any, at all times. The dearest friends often find one another indisposed, otherwise busy, morose, sour, and out of humour; apt to take, and perhaps, to give offence, on one hand, and the other. And whereas we should most intimately converse with ourselves; upon the mentioned accounts, we are, now, very often the worst company that can be, to ourselves; through the darkness, confusion, intricacy, and incoherence of our own thoughts; the fervour, and tumultuation of ill affections, and the sluggishness, and drowsy torpor of good. And in what case are we to please others, by our converse, that have so much cause, to be always, in a very great degree, displeased with ourselves!

When death shall have disencumbered, and set us free from all sorts of distempers, and brought us, into the state of perfect, and perfected spirits, how delectable will that society be! When all shall be full of divine light, life, love, and joy, and freely communicate, as they have received freely! How pleasant will it be, to sit down with "Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God." To converse with angels! Those wise, kind creatures! So full of profound knowledge, and benignity! instructed by long, uninterrupted, experience, and observation of the methods of the divine government, and dispensation; highly pleased with our accession to the "General assembly; that rejoiced in the conversion of a sinner," whereby but one, was hereafter, in due time, to be added, much more in the glorification of so many, that are now actually added to them! What delightful communings will there be, of the mysteries of nature! Of the methods of providence! Of the wonders of grace! Of the deep and hidden counsels of God! In what part it shall be agreeable to his wisdom, and good pleasure, to let them appear,

and stand in view. The conferences at the transfiguration, made the transported disciples say, "It is good to be here!" when the glory, which while it oppressed, pleased them. Though this was but a transient view.

But above all that is conceivable in that other state, how delectable will their society be in worship! In their unanimous adoration of the "Ever-blessed God! Father, Son, and Spirit!" In how pleasant, eternal raptures of delight, and praise, will all those excellent creatures be, that inhabit and replenish the vast realms of light, and bliss; when all behold, how the several kinds of being, light, life, excellency, and perfection, by a perpetual efflux, spring from the first. The fountain of all being. The parent of so glorious, and so numerous a progeny! all God-like, and bearing the bright image of their Father! O the inexpresaible pleasure of this consociation in worship, perpetually tendered with so absolute a plenitude of satisfaction, in the dueness of it! And the gustful apprehension of what whose words import, "Worthy art thou, O Lord!" each one relishing his own act, with just self-approbation, and high delight; heightened by their apprehended, perfect unanimity, and that there is among them, no dissenting vote. Whence it cannot be but to "worship God in Spirit and in truth, must be to enjoy him." And that he is not, under any other notion, more the satisfying object of our enjoyment, than as he is the object of our worship. What room, or pretence, is there now left, for unwillingness to die, on the account of relatives, we have been wont to converse with in this world? When such an exchange as this, is to be made by dying! But,

II. We are also to consider, There might be an intermixture in the temper of this good man's spirit, when he uttered these words, of somewhat faulty and blameable. Which we are to be cautioned against.

1. There might be too little consideration had, of the dignity and value of human life; of which the great God takes so particular care, to guard and sustain it both by law and providence. And of this creature, Man, so noble a part of divine workmanship, and whom he "set over all the works of his hands," in this lower world. To propound throwing away, at once, so many such lives, seems somewhat too precipitant.

2. The words seem not to savour enough of that deference

that is due to the God of our lives; whose prerogative it is to "kill, and to make alive:" to measure our time, and number our days. It might have been said, at least, "If God will," &c.

3. There might be in them, too little gratitude for the mercies of life, or patience of the difficulties of it: somewhat like that of Jonah, "Take now, I beseech thee, my life from me."

4. Too little regard to the business of life. It might have been, more at leisure, considered, is the business done, I was born for! Their special business, who were to be the "Apostles of our Lord, already called," Mat. 10. 1, &c. and instructed in great part in the work of their calling; was, apparently, too little considered, especially, how, or for what, his Lord was to die himself, so far as either from his own words, or from the prophets, might have been collected.

5. Nor, perhaps, enough; how awful a thing it was to die! to change states, and pass into eternity! This might, upon this account, be too hastily said. Good old Simeon seemed to have considered the matter more, when he said, "Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace," &c.

6. And there is reason to apprehend, in these words, too much displicency at the providence of God, in taking away such a man, now at such a time; with some appearance of despondency, concerning the christian interest. This Lazarus, is thought to have been a wealthy man (though he in the parable, is represented otherwise.) Christianity was, as yet, a little thing in the world. Our Lord had signalized himself, by his wonderful works, and drawn many eyes upon him, that were at a gaze, by his heavenly doctrine, and the true design of his coming, had entered into the minds of but a few; and they, of the meaner sort; "Had any of the rulers believed on him?" It was yet a dubious twilight; the dawning of the morning. "The Spirit, that was to convince the world, was not yet given, for Jesus was not yet glorified." John 7. 39. chap. 16. 8. Nicodemus, "a Rabbi," came to him, "but by night." This cause, as still, according to human estimate, depended much on reputation. "Men loved" (till an overpowering influence bore down all before it) "the praise of men, more than the praise of God;" John 12. 43. and "believed not, because they sought honour one of another." John 5. 44.

It was, now, a mighty loss, to have one such man drop, that

lived so near Jerusalem, where our Lord's great work did much lie, but where he chose not to lodge: this was in Bethany, but two miles off, a convenient retreat. The Master of the house is himself dislodged: and whereas, though the "Foxes had holes, and the birds nests, the Son of Man had not where to lay his head." Luke 9. 22, 23. This disciple might probably think, where shall be our next resort? Where is there a considerable person to be found, that will hereafter give us harbour and countenance? He might hence be induced, even to utter his *conclamatum est;* and to this purpose, say, now he is dead, "Let us all go die with him." Their Lord and Master had before told them, of his being ere long to be taken from them; and that his followers must count upon "taking up of their cross daily." And what, might he think, is to become of us, upon whom, left desolate, the stress is to lie, of the christian cause! What storms will be raised against us, whose province it must be, to plant and propagate a new religion in the world! The tenderest concern in all the world, and about which men are most apt to be enraged at any attempt of innovation! And by us, unlearned, uninterested, obscure and contemptible men! By what he here says, he seems "not afraid to die," but he seems "afraid to live," and face the storm, and contend with the difficulties, of that (even hopeless) undertaking, which he perceived himself, and his companions, designed unto. Rather than this, he seems to apprehend a present death was to be chosen.

And I, now, no way doubt, but any serious person, that shall be at the pains to commune with himself, will judge, there may be such quick turns of thoughts, this way, and that, as those opposite senses of this passage do import; the variety, and contrariety of principles that are in us, in this imperfect state, makes it no impossible thing, but that, amidst the various agitations of a musing mind, somewhat of grace, and somewhat of sin, yea much of an holy and heavenly temper, with some degree of incogitancy, haste, and faulty distemper, might be vented together in such an expression.

III. And now for the use of it, we must have distinct respect to both these sorts of sense, which the words may admit of. And,

1. For whatsoever of good sense they have in them, let us endeavour to have it deeply impressed, and inwrought into our

souls. So far as, upon good and self-justifying accounts, one may wish to die with another, eminently holy and good. Let us labour to be in that temper of spirit, that with all reverential submission to the wise, holy, and sovereign will of God, we may ever be ready to go with the first: "A good man should need only leave to die." Consider, are we so loose from all worldly enjoyments, and designs, as to be capable, when an holy man dies, of adopting these words, "Let me die with him?" Will they fit our spirits? Can we so far comport with them, as to avow it with an heart not reproaching us, that it is only obedience to the supreme ruler, nor terrene inclination, that makes us willing to survive such, as we see going off this stage before us? That if he in whose hands our breath is, will have us still live, we can submit "with patience;" if he signify his mind, we shall die, we shall comply "with gladness?" But,

Do we find it otherwise? Doth the bent of our own spirits urge and press us downward? And fix us to the earth? Are we so within its magnetism? We have a worse evil to fear than bodily death. "To be so carnally minded is death," in a far more horrid sense. This temper of mind, to prefer an earthly abode, before the purity, and bliss, of the "heavenly society," is so repugnant to the most constituent principles of a living christian, his faith of the unseen world, his delight in God, his love of the divine presence, and converse with the Father, and Son, in glory; his hatred of sin, and desire of perfect holiness, that he should rather take another name, than wear that of a christian, in conjunction with the allowance of so unchristian a spirit, a temper that tends to subvert whole christianity. And puts a man into a posture of hostility against the cross of Christ, and the very design of his dying. For in contradistinction to them, "whose conversation is in heaven, from whence they look for the Saviour, are they become the declared enemies of his cross, who mind earthly things;" Phil. 3. 18, 19, 20. preferring an earthly before the heavenly state. And the apostle tells such, (weeping as he wrote) that "their end will be destruction." This I must therefore say and testify in the Lord, that if any will indulge themselves in such a temper of spirit; and whosoever goes, even of the most excellent of God's saints and ministers, they would (because they love the present world more) stay with the last; "as to such, our preaching is vain, and their faith

is vain." But if there have been any within the compass of your knowledge and acquaintance, of whom dying, or lately dead, you could say, "Let me die with him, or die to be with him." Of whom would you rather say it, than of the excellent Dr. Bates!

But do you expect I should give you a distinct and full account of him? Many of you know, or may easily apprehend, I have not been in circumstances, by which it could be so much as possible to me. The surprising, overwhelming tidings of his death, with the signification of my being expected to do this part, first reached me, by just estimate, at about two hundred miles distance. Nor did any thing to that purpose, from such as were concerned, come to my hands, till a fortnight after his decease. At my return, towards the end of the week preceding this sad solemnity, I had my own charge, from which I had been long absent, to provide for against the Lord's Day: after which, only one day intervened, wherein thoughts that accompanied me in my way, were to be reduced into some order: but had I had never so much time and leisure, I cannot but reflect on what was said of that famous Roman, to give the just praises of Cicero, *Cicerone laudatore opus fuerit*, there was need of Cicero himself to be the encomiast.* No man knows how to speak becomingly of the excellencies of Dr. Bates, that hath not the eloquence of Dr. Bates. He did that office most laudably for divers others, for those reverend and truly great men, Dr. Manton, Mr. Clarkson, Dr. Jacomb, and the admirable Mr. Baxter. But now there is no man left to do it suitably for him, that is, that both is fit and willing. So that this part comes to be devolved, upon the unfittest among many. Yet thus, while others have declined it, out of a modest opinion of its being above them, whose abilities and conveniences, for the performance, did much more concur: this looks like an art, and contrivance of providence, to greaten him the more, that every one reckons him too great for their commendation: and, that consequently, he is to pass out of our world, as one too big for our praises, with no encomium, or that which is next to none. Though I first had the opportunity, and great pleasure of his acquaintance, above forty years ago; yet I have no present way

* Livius.

while I am writing this, of knowing, or recollecting, with certainty, any thing of the earlier days of his life. As therefore the case is, the little I shall say of him, shall be, not by way of history, but of character. Nor in giving somewhat of that, can one well omit,

(1.) To take notice of, what must with every one, come first in view, viz. His self-recommending aspect, composed of 'Gravity and pleasantness, with the graceful mien, and comeliness of his person.' That was said upon no slight consideration of the nature of man, from unbribed common estimate, that whatever a man's virtuous endowments be, it is the more taking and acceptable, as coming, ——*E pulchro corpore.* From a handsome well-framed body. God had designed him to circumstances, and a station, not obscure in the world, and had accordingly formed him with advantage; so as that his exterior, and first-aspectible part, might draw respect. And though the treasure to be lodged there, was to be put into 'an earthen vessel,' yet even that was wrought, *Meliore luto*, of finer, or more accurately figured, and better turned clay. He was "to stand before kings;" Prov. 22. 29. you know in what relation he stood "to one," as long as was convenient for some purposes; and how frequent occasion he had of appearing (never unacceptably) "before another." His concern lay not only "with mean men," though he could tell also how to condescend to the meanest. His aspect and deportment was not austere, but both decently grave and amiable, such as might command at once, both reverence and love; and was herein, not a lying, but the true picture of his mind.

I may (to this purpose) borrow his own words (and whose could I more rightfully borrow, or to so much advantage?) concerning that excellent person, alderman Ashurst, whose fragrant memory will long survive the age he lived in. And O that his example might govern in London, as long as his name lasts! Of him the doctor says, * 'A constant serenity reigned in his countenance, the visible sign of the divine calm in his breast;' "the peace of God that passes all understanding!" And who could have said this but Dr. Bates! Or so appositely have ap-

* Epistle to the Funeral Sermon for Mr. Benjamin Ashurst, Dedicated to Sir Henry.

plied what had an higher author! So expressively! so fully! so truly! and justly was it spoken! But also, of whom could this have been more fitly said, than *Mutato nomine*, of Dr. Bates! How rarely should we see a countenance so constant, and so faithful an index, of an undisturbed, composed mind? Through that, if we looked into this, how rich furniture of the "inner man" should we soon perceive, and admire!

(2.) His natural endowments, and abilities, appeared to every observer, great, much beyond the common rate. His apprehension quick, and clear. His reasoning faculty acute, prompt, and expert: so as readily and aptly to produce, and urge closely, the stronger and more pregnant arguments, when he was to use them; and soon to discern the strength of arguments, if he was to answer them. His judgment penetrating and solid, stable and firm. His wit never vain, or light, but most facetious and pleasant, by the ministry of a fancy, both very vigorous and lively; and most obedient to his reason; always remote both from meanness, and enormity. His memory was admirable, and never failed, that any one could observe, not impaired by his great age of seventy four: insomuch, that speeches made upon solemn occasions, of no in-elegant composition (some whereof the world hath seen, though extorted from him with great difficulty, and by much importunity) he could afterwards repeat to a word, when he had not penned one word of them before. And his sermons, wherein nothing could be more remote from ramble, he constantly delivered from his memory. And hath sometime told me, with an amicable freedom, that he partly did it, to teach some that were younger, to preach without notes. His learning, and acquired knowledge of things, usually reckoned to lie within that compass, was a vast treasure. He had lived a long, studious life; an earnest gatherer, and (as the phrase is) devourer of books.* With which he had so great an acquaintance, and they that were acquainted with him so well knew it, that one, who was for the dignity of his station, and the eminency of his endowments, as great a pillar, and as excellent an ornament of the church, as any it hath had for many an age, hath been known to say, that were he to collect a library, he would as soon consult Dr. Bates, as any man he knew. He was indeed himself a living one.

* Helluc.

He knew how to choose, and was curious in his choice. Whatsoever belonged to the finer, and more polite sort of literature, was most grateful to him, when it fell into a conjunction with what was also most useful. Nothing mean was welcome into his library, or detained there; much less thought fit to be entertained, and laid up, in the more private repository of his mind. To speak of the particular parts of his learning wherein he excelled, were to trifle, when there are so many visible effects extant, that enough inform the world. His divine knowledge, and the abundant grace of God in him, have been eminently conspicuous, the same way, in great part; but otherwise also. For his private conversation was so instructive, so quickening, in reference to what lay within the confines of religion, and godliness, that no man of ordinary capacity could hear his usual, and most familiar discourses, but either with great negligence, or great advantage.

When he hath been to consider a case of conscience, I have sometimes had opportunity to observe, with what wisdom, what caution, what tenderness, he hath spoken to it, and with what compass of thought; turning it round this way, and that; most strictly regarding our sacred rule, and weighing all circumstances that concerned the case: but withal, taking occasion from thence (when the persons concerned have not been present) to magnify and adore the grace of God; which he would do most pathetically, and with great affection; for keeping us out of the way of temptation. Which he thought was too little considered by christians; and thereby saving us from the entanglements, and perplexities of spirit, as well as from the scandals that befel many. I never knew any more frequent, and affectionate, in the admiration of divine grace, upon all occasions, than he was; or who had a deeper sense of the impotency, and pravity of human nature.

His discourses were usually (as our rule directs) "savoury, as seasoned with salt, and such as might minister grace to the hearers." He was frequently visited by persons of higher rank, and that made no mean figure in the world. Of whom, some have acknowledged, that going abroad upon hazardous employments, they have received from him, such wise and pious counsels, as have stuck by them, and they have been the better for, afterwards. Though in his communing with so many friends,

whom he irresistibly constrained to covet his most desirable society, he did not exclude the things that were of common human concernment, he still discovered a temper of mind most intent upon divine things. He did not look with a slight or careless eye upon the affairs of the public; but consider, and speak of them as a man of prospect, and large thought, with much prudence, and temper; not curiously prying into the arcana of government, or reasons of state, which it was necessary should be under a veil; much less rudely censuring what it was not fit should be understood: but what was open to common view, he was wont to discourse of instructively; both as lying under the direction of providence, and as relating to the interest of religion.

Nor was he wont to banish out of his conversation the pleasantness that fitly belonged to it: for which his large acquaintance, with a most delightful variety of story, both ancient and modern, gave him advantage beyond most. His judicious memory, being a copious promptuary, of what was profitable, facetious, and disdaining to be the receptacle of useless trash. To place religion in a morose sourness, was remote from his practice, his judgment, and his temper. But his discourses, taking in, often, things of a different nature, were interwoven with religion, and centred in it; especially such things as were most intimate, and vital to it, of those things, he was wont to speak, with that savour and relish, as plainly showed, he spake not forcedly, or with affectation, as acting a part; but from the settled temper, and habit of his soul. Into what transports of admiration of the love of God, have I seen him break forth! when some things foreign, or not immediately relating, to practical godliness, had taken up a good part of our time. How easy a step did he make of it, from earth to heaven! Such as have been wont, in a more stated course, to resort to him can tell, whether, when other occasions did fall in, and claim their part, in the discourses of that season, he did not usually send them away, with somewhat that tended to better their spirits, and quicken them in their way heavenward? With how high flights, of thought, and affection, was he wont to speak, of the heavenly state! Even like a man much more of kin to that other world, than to this! And for his 'Ministerial qualifications, and labours;' do I need to say any thing to themselves, who had the benefit thereof?

Either them, who have so many years lived under his most fruitful, enlightening, quickening, edifying ministry? 'Whether week by week,' as his beloved, peculiarly privileged charge, at Hackney, that mournful, desolate people! Who have been fed with the heavenly, hidden Manna, and with the fruits of the tree of life, that grows in the midst of the paradise of God; so prepared, and presented to them, and made pleasant to their taste, as few besides have ever had: but now sit in sorrow, hopeless of full, or any equal relief, but by transportation into that paradise itself, whence all their refections were wont to come! Or do I need to inform such inhabitants of London, as in a 'doubled three monthly course,' have, for many years, in throng-assembly, been wont to hang upon his lips? To whose, if to any one's in our days, the characters belonged, of the wise, and the righteous man's lips, which are said to "disperse knowledge;" Prov. 15. 7. and (which is therefore most agreeable) to "feed many." chap. 10. 21. Or can it be needful to acquaint the world? Who have volumes of his discourses, of sermons in their hands! Or tell them of their singular excellencies, who can as well tell me! I can speak to none of his great worth and accomplishments, as a richly furnished, and most skilful, dispenser of divine knowledge, and of the mysteries of the gospel of Christ, an 'instructed scribe, able to bring forth of his treasury things new and old;" but who may say to me, as those "Samaritan christians, we believe him to be such; not because of thy saying; for we have heard (or read) him ourselves." And they may say so, with judgment, upon this proof, that shall consider both the select, choice, and most important matter of his tractates, and sermons, published, or unpublished. And the peculiar way and manner of his tractation thereof.

For the former: 'The choice of subjects;' and of such materials of discourse, as are to be reduced, and gathered in to them, discovers as much of the judgment, spirit, and design of the compiler, as any thing we can think of. When we consider what sort of things, a man's mind hath been exercised, and taken up about, through so long a course and tract of time; we may see what things he counted great, important, necessary to be insisted on, and most conducing to the ends, which one, of his calling, and station, ought to design, and aim at. And are thereupon to appeal to ourselves, whether he did not judge and

design aright, and as he ought? As what could be of greater importance, than to discover the 'Harmony of God's Attributes,' in the work of saving sinners? 'The final happiness of man: the four last things,' &c. What more important than that of spiritual perfection? Which last he dropped, as Elijah, his mantle, when he was to ascend into that state, most perfectly perfect; wherein that which he had been discoursing of, finally terminates. Read it, and invocate the Lord God of Elijah! saying, "Where is he?" Nor were his discourses of less consequence, that, in his stated course, he delivered to his constant hearers. They were always much allied to the lamp, and did not need to fear the brightest light. His last sermon in this place, (who of us thought it the last! Hearing it delivered, with so much life and spirit?) challenges our re-consideration over and over. It was about "Sins against knowledge," from Luke 12. 47. A warning to the age, uttered (though not faintly) as with his dying breath. O that it could have reached ears, and hearts, as far as the concern of it doth reach. The sins of our days, of professors, and of others, are more generally, sins against knowledge, than heretofore, and may make us expect and dread the more stripes, that text speaks of.

As for his manner and way of handling what he undertook, we may use the words, which he recites from the incomparable bishop Wilkins, concerning Mr. Baxter; which, no doubt, if there had then been the occasion, he would have judged not unapplicable here also: 'That he cultivated every subject he handled, and had he lived in an age of the fathers, he would have been one.' His method in all his discourses, might be exposed to the most critical censurer. What could be more accurate? And for his style, it was even inimitably polite, and fine; but to him, so natural, that it was more uneasy to have used a coarser style, than to others; so neat a one as his was. Nor is it to be thought strange, that there should be in this, a peculiarity; style being, to any man, as appropriate, upon the matter, as his visage, or voice; and as immediately depending on the temper of the mind, in conjunction with fancy, as that is, more or less, brisk, lively, and vigorous; as the other do on the complexion of the body, or the disposition of the organs of speech. They that would, in this case, attempt to force nature, would, I suspect, be very awkward at it, would bungle scurvily, and

soon find, they had better be content to creep on all four, than aim to fly and soar, with borrowed wings, or stolen feathers. If God, with a man's nature, gives a disposition of this kind, it may, in his younger years, admit of innocent improvement: but that which is most peculiar to any, in this respect, is what one insensibly slides into, with no more design, than one hath to walk after this, or that manner; by which, yet, many persons are known, and distinguishable from other men. But I doubt not, that excellency in any such kind, as hath been anciently observed of poetry, and oratory, must have its foundation in nature; and they that will strive against that stream, will soon perceive, that such proverbial sayings were grounded upon prudent observation and long experience, that a mercury is not to be made of every log; and that nothing is to be attempted, *invita minerva*, or against one's genius, and natural inclination. Therefore that monition, *Lege historiam ne fias historia*, one may vary and say, cave, &c. Take heed of a proverb, lest thou become a proverb.* That is easy, and pleasant, which is natural. And now when the grace of God supervenes, and doth exalt, and sublimate nature, it makes that mean beginning, and its progress, into use and custom; which is said to be a second nature, subservient to very high and excellent purposes; as is eminently conspicuous in the doctor's peculiar way of preaching and writing: especially in his frequent, most apt, similitudes, and allusions; to be attributed to a brisk and vivid fancy, regulated by judgment, and sanctified by divine grace, so as greatly to serve his pious purpose; to illustrate the truth he designed to recommend, and give it the greatest advantage of entering into the mind, with light and pleasure; and at once both to instruct and delight his reader or hearer. And so much more grateful have his illustrations been, by how much the more they have been surprising, and remote from any fore thought in them that read, or heard. And I may here freely put his most constant and attentive hearers, upon recollecting, whether he have not usually pleased them, by surprising them? (for I know there are surprisals ungrateful enough.) And in most sermons, whether they did not meet with what they did not expect from him; and might in vain have expected from any body else?

Πᾶν φυσικὸν ἡδὺ

Some, it is possible, may find fault with that in this kind, to which they can do nothing like themselves; who yet, I hope, may admit of conviction of their own fault, herein, by gentler means, than by being put in mind of the fable. They might, upon the matter, as well find fault, that God had made him a taller man than the most; perhaps, than themselves, or of a more comely complexion, or that all were not of one stature, size, or feature. If any do, it is most probably such, to whom one may truly say, they blame what they could not mend, nor he, help; at least, without much pain to himself, and to no purpose. One may venture to say, that in that fine way of expressing himself, which was become habitual to him, he much more pleased others than himself. For in the excellent Mr. Baxter, he highly commends much another way, saying of him,* He had a marvellous felicity, and copiousness in speaking. There was a noble negligence in his style. For his great mind could not stoop to the affected eloquence of words. Very excellent men excel in different ways: the most radiant stones may differ in colour, when they do not in value.

His judgment in ecclesiastical matters, was to be known by his practice; and it was such, that he needed not care who knew it. He was for entire union of all visible christians, (or saints, or believers, which in scripture are equivalent terms) meaning by christianity, what is essential thereto; whether doctrinal, or practical, as by humanity, we mean, what is essential to man, severing accidents, as not being of the essence. And by visibility, the probable appearance thereof. And for free communion of all such, of whatsoever persuasion, in extra-essential matters, if they pleased. And this design he vigorously pursued, as long as there was any hope; desisting, when it appeared hopeless, and resolving to wait till God should give a spirit suitable hereto; from an apprehension, that, when principles on all hands, were so easily accommodable, and yet that there was with too many, a remaining insuperable reluctancy to the thing itself, God must work the cure, and not man. Accounting also, in the mean time, that notwithstanding misrepresentations, it was better to cast a mantle over the failings of brethren, than be concerned to detect and expose them. Knowing, that if we

* In his funeral sermon, p. 90.

be principally solicitous for the name of God, he will in his own way and time, take care of ours. And in this sentiment he was not alone.

But now is this great luminary, this burning and shining light, (not extinct, but) gone out of our horizon. We for a season rejoiced in this light, and are we not to mourn for its disappearance? Yet not without hope. O! the inconceivable loss of his domestical relatives! Who, in respect of his most private capacity, and conversation, are deprived of such an head, father, and guide! yet in this lies their advantage, that since nothing that is mortal can fill up his room, they are under a necessity, to betake themselves thither where the surest and fullest relief is to be had. Having in the mean time, among mortals, a far greater number of fellow-sufferers and fellow-mourners, to bear a part with them in their sorrows, and ready to afford them all suitable consolation, than most in this world can be capable of expecting in such a case. Let those of his own peculiar charge; let those that were wont, though not so often, in a stated course, to hear him in this place, with all other his more occasional hearers, mourn, that they are to hear no more his weighty sentences, his sweet honey-dropping words: let them mourn, that never heard to purpose, that were never allured, never won, that were always deaf to this charmer, though charming so wisely. Let those that have got good by him, mourn, that, in this way, they are to get no more; those that have got none, that they have lost so much of their day; that they are to be addressed, by this persuasive advocate for Christ, and their own souls, no more. Let his brethren, all of us, mourn, that we have lost so prudent, so humble, so instructive, so encouraging a guide, so bright an ornament from among us.

But let none of us mourn without hope. God will be a husband to the widow trusting in him, and the father of the fatherless, taking God in Christ for their father, and their God. He hath not forgot the titles he hath assumed. He can also find, or make for his widowed church, a pastor after his own heart. And the great shepherd and bishop of souls, that gave his life for the sheep, though he was dead, is alive, and lives for evermore. All his hearers, though they are no more to hear his pleasant human voice, sounding in their ears, if they attend and listen, may hear a divine voice crying after them, "This is the

way, walk in it. And let them know, that the gospel he preached, is immortal, and never dies, though all flesh is grass: and his own books, though he is dead, yet speak. We, his brethren, were to follow him, as he followed Christ; who will himself be with us, always to the end. The work wherein he was engaged, was common to him and us. Herein, if we follow him, though not with equal steps, faithfully endeavouring to "turn many to righteousness," we shall shine as he doth, like the stars in the firmament, we need not be solicitous, though not with equal lustre, as "one star differs from another in glory." 1 Cor. 15. 41.

The cause wherein he was engaged unto his death, and from which no offered emoluments, or dignities, could ever draw him, was not that of a party; for he was of none, and was of too large a mind to be of any, but that noble cause of union and communion, with all christians that hold the head. That cause is not dead with him. Now that he is dead, we are to say, as that is the voice of the christian faith, of divine and brotherly love, "let us die with him," but not as it is the voice of despondency, or despair. Let us covet to be with him in that blessed state; the reality whereof we believe, and of which our faith is to be to us the substance and evidence.

I know no good man, that, knowing him, would not say, "Let me die with him." I very well know, who would. And, if breasts could be laid open to inspection, as by a glass, do know, in whose breast this sense would be found, engraven, as with the point of a diamond. O! that my soul were in his soul's stead, or, if the Supreme Disposer had thought fit, or seen an equal fitness for translation, that I had died with him, but, knowing his much greater usefulness in this world, O! that I had died for him. For since it is expressly said, "We ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." 1 John 3. 16. A life, that could, regularly, and effectually, have redeemed his, had been laid down for many, in that one, of holy, prudent, heavenly Dr. Bates. This is the sense of one, not weary, blessed be God, of the business of life, and that enjoys as much of the comforts of life, as any man can reasonably wish, scarce any one more. But it must be confessed, as this world was not worthy of this servant of Christ; it is become far less worthy now so excellent a person hath left it. His love, his converse,

was pleasant, beyond what can be expressed! It is now a grievance not to have a part with the silent mourners, when lamentations could freely have been poured forth, without noise or interruption! As the case is, necessity lays a restraint, and leaves it an easier thing to die, than weep out; otherwise, can one be shy in a way that can admit it, to tell the world, that to live in it, now he is dead out of it, much less deserves the name of life! It can be felt,* that those words, among the many, divine raptures, of that holy man, have a most perceptible meaning. When I got health, thou tookest away my life; and more, for my friends die. If one may innocently borrow words, from so impure a mouth, they are very expressive: I scarce count myself a man, when without Iamblichus.†

Here were two souls knit together, as the soul of one man! What there is of present separation, shall be but for a little while. And by how much the separation is more grievous, the reunion will be with the stronger propension, and the more delightful, everlasting cohesion. As also, separation from this terrene clog will be much the easier. One great weight is added above, to pulley up what ought to ascend, thither. How can that but be a blessed state, into which, he that is essential love hath caught up such a man! One, in so great part, transformed before, into the same likeness, and fitted to dwell in love! And accordingly God took him, even kissed away his soul, as hath been said of those great favourites of heaven; did let him die without being sick; vouchsafed him that great privilege, which a good man would choose before many, not to out-live serviceableness. To live till one be weary of the world, not till the world be weary of him! Thus he prayed wisely, thus God answered graciously.

2. But be it far from us to say, "Let us die with him," as despairing of our cause. If our cause be not that of any self-distinguished party; but truly that common christian cause, of which you have heard. While it is the divine pleasure to continue us here, let us be content, and submit, to live and own it, to live and serve it, to our uttermost. If ever God design good days to the christian church on earth, this is the cause that must prevail, and triumph in a glorious conquest over death. But I

* Herbert. † Julian Epist. —ἀν—μὴ θυνῶ

must freely tell you my apprehensions, which I have often hinted, that I fear it must die first; I mean, a temporary death; I fear it, for it hath been long, gradually, dying already: and spiritual diseases, which have this tendency, are both sinful, and penal. Lazarus' death and resurrection, I think, to have been meant, for a sort of prolusion, to the death, and resurrection of Christ, both personal, and mystical. I only say this for illustration, not for proof. That sickness and death of his, was not in order to a permanent death, but for the glory of God; that when the case was deplorate, and hopeless, and he four days buried, he might, surprisingly, spring up again alive. I know not, but the sickness and death, of this our incomparably worthy friend, and (for ought I know, of many more of us) may be appointed, the same way, to be for the glory of God; that is, as tending to introduce that death, which is to pass upon our common cause; which such men help to keep alive, by their earnest strugglings, though in a languishing, fainting, condition, every hour.

Think me not so vain, as to reckon, exclusively, the cause of dissenters, the cause I now speak of: No, no, I speak of the common cause, of all serious, sober-minded christians, within the common rule, or without it. I neither think any one party to include all sobriety of mind, or to exclude all insobriety. But I apprehend converting work to be much at a stand, within the pales, that men have set up, severing one party from another, and without them. Few are any where brought home to God, through Christ. And God knows, too few design it, otherwise, than to make proselytes, to their several parties. And this is thought a glorious conversion. Serious piety, and christianity, languishes every where. Many that have a name to live are dead, and putrefied, already stink! Common justice, and righteousness, are fled from among us. Sincerely good and pious men, die away in the natural sense, apace. You know, if deaths burials, should, in the weekly bills, exceed birth, and other accessions, to the city, whither this tends! When so many great lights are withdrawn, both such as were within the national church constitution, and such as were without it. Is there no danger God should also remove the candlestick?

Our obduration, and insensible stupidity, portends a deadly darkness to be drawing on. And must such lives go, to make a way for God's anger? And lead on a more general, and more

dreadful, approaching death! Oh! "that God would rent the heavens, and come down!" He may yet melt our hearts, and make them "flow at his presence," notwithstanding their mountainous, rocky height, and hardness. This may be the means of saving some souls, and of deferring the common calamity. A great thing it would be, to have it deferred. What a privilege would many sevants of Christ count it, not to live to the day, when the spirit of the living God, shall be generally retired and gone. And atheism, sceptism, infidelity, worldliness, and formality, have quite swallowed up our religion. While such men as we have lost, lived, they did, and such do, as instruments, keep somewhat of serious religion alive, under our several forms, but as ready to expire. But though it should seem generally to have expired, let us believe it shall revive. When our confidences, and vain boasts cease, "The temple of the Lord! The temple of the Lord! Lo here is Christ, and there is Christ. And one sort ceases to magnify this church, and another that, and an universal death is come upon us, then (and I am not afraid, not till then) is to be expected a glorious resurrection, not of this or that party: for living, powerful religion, when it recovers, will disdain the limits of a party. Nor is it to be thought, that religion, modified by the devised distinctions, of this, or that party, will ever be the religion of the world. But the same power that makes us return into a state of life, will bring us into a state of unity, in divine light, and love. Then, will all the scandalous marks, and means, of division, among christians, vanish. And nothing remain as a test, or boundary of christian communion, but what hath its foundation, such, as in plain reason, or express revelation. Then as there is one body, and one Spirit, will that almighty spirit so animate, and form this body, as to make it every-where amiable, self-recommending, and capable of spreading, and propagating itself, and to "increase with the increase of God. Then shall the Lord be one, and his name one, in all the earth.

GREEK WORDS AND PHRASES

More or less explained in the course

OF THE

WORK.

	Vol.	Page.
Αθεοι	i	260
Αιρειν	i	366
Αντι	i	359
Αντιψυχοι	i	—
Αντιλυτρον	i	358
Αντι ιχθυος οφιν	i	359
Αντι Ηρωδου	i	—
Ανανηφειν	i	288
Ανθος χαιρε	iii	200
Ανωθεν	iv	374
Αυτοκατακριτος	iv	13
Δεος	iii	250
Εκλυε	iv	86
Εμβαλευων	iii	228
Ιλαστηριον	i	364
Λυπη κατα θεον	i	232
Λυτρον αντι πολλων	i	359
Ολιγωρει	iv	82
Παραγγελια	ii	400
Παρακυψαι	i	240
Προσφορα θυσια	i	365
Πνευμα δειλειας	iii	592
Συνεχει	i	337
Σωματα	i	296
Τα μεγαλεια του Θεου	i	237
Το χαριζεσθαι	i	369

SCRIPTURES ILLUSTRATED.

The passages distinguished by an Asterisk are the texts of particular discourses.

GENESIS.

Ch.	Ver.	Vol.	Page.
1	20	3	39
2	7	4	349
—	17	1	192
—	—	—	194
—	—	3	242
2	19	—	183
3	6	1	195
—	—	—	202
—	—	3	204
—	10	1	205
—	—	2	42
—	11	3	326
—	12	1	233
—	13	—	197
—	15	—	253
—	17, 18	—	206
—	22	—	326
4	21, 22	3	308
5	2	4	298
—	3	2	25
—	5	1	210
—	9	2	358
9	6	1	182
13	10,11	—	80
17	1	—	393
18	20,21	3	326
—	27	—	55
22	12	1	303
—	—	2	98
24	3	3	120
—	63	—	126
*39	9	4	33
49	1	1	530
—	10	—	149
—	18	4	306

EXODUS.

Ch.	Ver.	Vol.	Page.
3	5	4	353
7	16, 19	4	166
8	5	—	—
9	27, 28	2	240
10	13, 19	4	82
—	26	3	269
12	13	1	364
—	35	4	29
15	1, 11	3	31
—	15	1	403
16	9	4	166
17	6	1	536
19	5	2	393
20	1	4	143
—	6	1	410
32	24	2	42
33	19	—	38
34	6	1	285

LEVITICUS.

Ch.	Ver.	Vol.	Page.
1	17	1	362
5	6	—	364
—	13	2	48
14	12	1	364
16	14, 15	—	375
17	11	—	362
19	17	2	417
26	23, 24	4	91
—	41	2	154

NUMBERS.

Ch.	Ver.	Vol.	Page.
2	3	1	530
12	2	2	358
15	40	3	135
23	10	4	430
31	16	2	122

DEUTERONOMY.

Ch.	Ver.	Vol.	Page.
3	17, 18	2	329
5	4	4	143
—	22	1	245
6	11, 12	2	275
—	13	3	238
—	22	2	220
7	9	—	505
—	—	4	305
8	5	—	95
—	12	2	275
10	20	3	238
21	23	1	307
—	—	—	355
23	14	3	171
24	15	—	54
—	—	4	308
25	17—19	—	113
29	17,19,20	—	44
—	19	3	64
—	—	—	69
—	—,20	2	34
—	——	—	263
—	24	—	—
30	19	3	106
32	4	2	163
—	6	—	258
—	—	—	262
—	—	4	320
—	15	2	222
—	21	1	149
—	34	3	347
33	26	2	391

JOSHUA.

Ch.	Ver.	Vol.	Page.
1	8	3	116
—	—	—	121
3	16	—	300
6	26	4	86
10	12	—	106

JUDGES.

Ch.	Ver.	Vol.	Page.
9	48	1	444
11	36	2	164

I SAMUEL.

Ch.	Ver.	Vol.	Page.
15	15	2	42
—	21	3	330
—	29	4	187
16	11	4	83
17	37	2	111
18	1	3	36
22	11	2	95
24	9	1	291
26	10	3	243
—	21	—	287
28	20	—	258

II SAMUEL.

3	10, 11	3	250
7	14	1	317
—	—	—	387
—	—	4	97
—	18	1	331
9	7,8	—	330
—	——	2	444
11	25	3	330
14	20	—	477
15	30	4	84
16	9, 10	2	148
23	5	1	320
—	—	2	524
24	17	1	312
—	24	2	53

I KINGS.

2	31	4	283
8	27	3	12
—	38	2	105
12	4	4	120
17	20,21	—	167
20	28	2	391
22	34	—	182
—	—	—	392
—	—	4	82

II KINGS.

4	33,34	4	167
—	—	3	272
—	38	2	182
7	1	3	70
—	20	2	257
8	12,13	—	218
9	37	3	248

I CHRONICLES.

29	14	3	54

II CHRONICLES.

2	4	4	354
5	13,14	—	—
6	30	1	259
15	17	2	106
16	9	—	392
17	3	—	271
—	—	—	524
20	12	—	130

EZRA.

9	13	2	154

NEHEMIAH.

1	11	3	174
9	16,17	2	329

ESTHER.

1	4,5	3	39
2	12	—	101

JOB.

2	1	4	298
—	3	2	178
3	18,19	1	297
4	17	3	495
5	6	4	82
—	27	3	116
8	20	1	238
9	22	2	358
10	3	—	148
—	8	4	41
11	7	1	279
—	—,9	2	373
12	4	4	112
14	1	3	260
—	4	2	298
14	14	1	210
15	25,26	4	94
17	11	3	149
21	19	—	136
22	13,14	4	45
—	—	3	323
—	21	4	89
*28	28	3	168
29	2,3	—	400
—	——,4	4	222
31	4,7	2	99
—	25	—	311
32	2	—	164
—	8	3	194
33	20	2	96
34	31,32	—	154
—	——	4	94
—	—	3	180
35	6	1	286
—	7	—	—
36	8,10	2	158
—	21	1	202
—	—	3	251
38	4,6	4	8
—	4,5,7	—	349
—	7	1	237
—	—	3	117
—	8—11	4	8
42	3,6	2	144
—	7,8	1	368

PSALMS.

1	1,2	3	122
—	2	2	87
2	2,3	3	4
—	11	—	188
—	—	4	25
3	6	1	225
4	4	2	508
—	—	3	127
—	6,7	2	280
—	7	—	58
—	—	3	29
5	1	—	130
—	11	4	21
6	5, 4	—	357
7	11—13	—	164
8	2	3	31
—	4, 6	1	50
—	5	4	23
—	—,6	1	189
9	20	2	272
10	4	—	219
11	—	4	354
—	5,7	1	343
14	1	3	346
—	—	4	29

Psa.	Ver.	Vol.	Page.
15	4	2	452
—	10	—	113
16	2	3	57
—	7	—	127
—	8	—	153
—	—	—	170
—	10	1	489
*	11	—	369
—	—	—	462
—	—	3	45
—	—	4	314
—	19	1	389
17	15	3	45
—	—	—	77
*18	23	2	65
—	26	—	168
19	1	1	236
—	—,2,3	4	6
—	7, 8	—	77
—	9	3	179
—	—	4	125
—	11	3	171
—	—	1	192
—	12	3	329
—	—	—	360
22	6	4	396
—	25,27	1	149
26	3	3	135
—	9	4	431
27	4	3	43
30	8,9	2	80
31	5	4	306
32	1	2	52
—	2	—	42
—	5	—	11
34	2	—	275
—	5	—	203
—	9	1	535
36	6	2	153
—	8	4	358
37	35,36	—	377
—	37	2	98
38	4,6	3	106
39	1	1	506
—	3	3	130
—	—	—	139
—	8	1	153
—	13	3	91
40	5	—	152
—	6, 8	1	112
—	12	3	331
42	1	—	44
—	2	—	91
—	5	—	163
—	11	2	202
44	22	3	348
48	10	2	53
49	12	1	200
—	16,17	3	248
—	20	1	296
—	—	2	266
50	21	1	214
—	—	2	265
—	—	3	217
—	—	—	346
—	—	—	347
—	22	1	48
—	—	4	316
—	23	1	237
—	—	2	59
51	5	1	210
—	11,12	3	166
—	17	2	194
55	19	1	222
57	10	—	233
58	4	4	84
59	35	1	403
62	9	3	209
63	3	2	280
—	—	3	173
—	5,6	—	134
64	9,10	—	185
—	16	4	5
67	1,2	1	149
68	17	4	396
—	18	1	450
—	—	2	131
69	22	—	214
70	8,9	4	400
73	9—14	—	16
—	13	1	77
—	14	4	87
—	17	—	380
—	—	2	45
—	22	—	390
—	24	4	306
—	25	2	116
74	16	1	8
77	7	3	493
—	10	2	238
78	24	1	535
—	37	2	259
—	49	3	240
80	1	1	375
81	13	—	332
82	6,7	4	191
84	11	1	55
—	—	2	113
—	12	—	186
85	10	1	239
86	5	2	7
—	11	3	180
—	—	—	—
89	4	—	245
—	3—33	2	161
—	6	—	316
—	30—32	4	95
90	4	—	401
—	8	3	329
—	11	—	482
—	12	1	298
92	5	2	150
94	5,6	3	350
—	19	2	189
96	4,5	1	481
97	9	3	239
—	11	2	114
100	3	1	191
—	—	3	4
—	—	—	7
—	—	—	311
102	25,26	—	11
103	1,2	2	51
—	—	—	275
—	12	—	29
—	13	4	299
—	20	2	175
*102	26,27	4	181
—	22,23	—	5
106	4	2	264
—	14	3	427
109	6,7	—	332
110	1	1	378
—	3	—	533
—	—	3	7
—	4	1	112
112	1	3	188

Psa.	Ver.	Vol.	Page.
112	7	—	116
114	1,5	—	31
—	7	—	219
116	12	2	36
—	21	3	87
118	28	2	57
119	6	3	8
—	8	2	506
—	11,15	3	135
—	33	—	174
—	59	2	509
—	67	1	388
—	76	2	158
—	106	—	126
*—	119	3	97
—	149	4	39
125	4	2	107
126	5	3	29
*130	4	1	1
—	—	—	—
138	2	4	16
—	—	—	366
—	3	2	203
139	12	3	329
—	14—16	4	41
—	15	—	23
—	17,19	2	208
141	3	—	506
—	5	—	159
—	—	—	461
143	2	1	387
—	3	2	131
145	10	1	190
—	17	—	216
—	19,20	3	187
147	4	2	391
—	5	—	182
148	5	4	23
—	8	2	175

PROVERBS.

Ch.	Ver.	Vol.	Page.
1	11,12	3	333
—	17	2	126
—	—	3	194
—	22	2	252
—	24—29	—	260
—	——	—	212
—	26	—	22
—	28,29	3	289
*1	29	2	257
—	32	—	211
2	10	3	196
3	9,10	2	323
—	12	4	81
4	2	3	129
5	11,13	2	240
6	16	—	332
—	22	3	120
—	—	—	126
7	18	—	393
8	9	2	454
—	12	3	196
—	15	1	300
—	26	3	496
—	27,29	1	184
—	31	4	358
—	36	2	25
11	30	4	163
13	10	2	217
—	13	3	176
15	7	4	447
—	19	3	45
16	4	1	189
—	7	3	87
—	—	—	199
—	32	2	113
19	3	—	167
—	14	4	87
21	16	—	92
—	26	3	208
22	29	4	443
23	7	3	147
24	12	—	330
28	1	—	251
—	13	1	41
—	14	3	216
29	1	2	34
30	9	—	219

ECCLESIASTES.

Ch.	Ver.	Vol.	Page.
1	1	4	310
—	4	3	242
—	8	—	78
—	17	4	310
2	13	1	263
4	10	4	322
5	1	3	181
—	2	4	25
6	12	2	166
7	2,4	—	268
—	6	—	266
—	26,28	—	302
8	2	3	345
—	8	—	246
9	3	4	116
10	7	1	95
11	—	3	250
—	9	—	351
12	1	2	333
—	8	4	310
—	13	3	168
—	—	4	26
—	14	3	327
—	—	—	344
13	7	—	210

CANTICLES.

Ch.	Ver.	Vol.	Page.
1	4	3	306
2	16	—	394
4	7	—	—
7	11	—	138
10	6	—	394

ISAIAH.

Ch.	Ver.	Vol.	Page.
1	2,3	3	458
—	3	2	252
—	5	4	90
—	6	1	298
—	10	4	162
—	16	2	298
—	—17	1	407
—	——	2	297
—	—18	3	319
4	9,6	4	105
5	18	3	144
6	1	4	396
—	—,3	—	170
—	2	2	433
—	—,3	3	323
—	3	1	403
—	—	3	21
—	—	—	36
—	5	2	457
7	14	1	482
8	12,13	3	223
10	3	2	329
—	12,13	4	408

Ch.	Ver.	Vol.	Page.
11	2	3	189
—	—,4	—	316
14	11	—	248
—	12,14	2	333
22	1	4	399
23	8	3	140
26	19	4	429
28	15	1	296
—	29	2	164
29	10	—	265
33	6	3	174
—	22	—	311
—	24	2	53
35	5,9	1	484
38	3	2	114
—	11	3	247
—	12	—	246
—	19,20	2	58
40	6	1	53
—	—,7	—	223
—	15—17	—	300
—	26	2	391
43	20	3	5
—	25	2	—
—	—	—	39
44	6	4	182
—	12	—	260
—	16,17	2	237
—	21	1	191
45	2,3	3	344
—	9	2	155
—	12	1	191
—	15	4	396
46	1,2	1	544
48	13	4	30
49	1,6	1	150
—	14,16	2	199
51	9	—	111
—	12,13	4	26
53	2	1	302
—	4	1	312
—	—,5	2	411
—	5	1	354
—	6	—	355
—	—	3	258
—	7	1	539
—	8	4	300
—	10	1	356
—	11	—	260
53	11	1	324
—	—	4	358
54	8	2	181
—	7,8	4	401
55	—	1	250
56	12	3	333
57	1,2	—	259
—	10	1	225
59	2	2	158
60	19	—	364
61	10	—	186
—	—	4	172
64	8	—	298
65	6	3	330
66	3	—	229

JEREMIAH.

2	12,13	4	44
—	19	2	158
—	24	—	240
—	25	3	170
4	14	2	298
5	3	4	84
—	—	2	146
—	24	3	170
6	10	—	319
7	16	2	19
8	7	4	135
—	9	3	202
10	2	—	226
—	24	1	387
13	16	3	285
—	17	2	459
14	12	3	488
17	1	—	331
—	10	—	330
—	11	2	255
18	12	1	230
20	14	2	148
23	11	—	89
26	3	3	498
31	15	2	149
—	20	—	45
—	26	—	194
—	34	—	29
—	35	4	306

LAMENTATIONS.

3	22	2	154
3	22	2	407
—	24	4	27
—	—	2	316
—	—	—	189
—	—	3	46
—	33	2	22
—	39	—	154
—	40	—	508
5	19,20	4	190

EZEKIEL.

3	5	1	293
16	6	1	299
—	42	2	269
—	49	—	225
18	4	1	293
—	21	2	201
—	23	1	332
—	24	4	438
20	25	1	422
22	14	4	408
28	2	2	219
33	11	1	332
—	—	2	261
—	—	4	156
—	31	2	89
36	25—37	—	489
—	26	1	321
—	31	2	304
37	4,5,6	1	516

DANIEL.

2	22,25	3	248
3	6	1	47
—	27	—	299
5	1—4	3	253
—	27	—	326
7	10	4	37
9	25	1	531
10	17	—	245
12	2	2	256
—	—	3	486

HOSEA.

4	11	2	279
7	—	4	84
11	1	—	298
—	4	2	214

Ch.	Ver.	Vol.	Page.
11	8	1	332
—	—	2	21
—	9	—	38
13	6	—	275
14	2	—	19
—	8	—	103

AMOS.

3	4	4	94
—	5	—	91
—	6	—	82
6	3,4	3	254
8	7	—	347

JONAH.

2	2	2	13

MICAH.

6	5	4	83
—	6,7	1	395
6	—	2	33
7	1	4	399
7	9	2	154
—	—	—	29
—	16	1	285
—	—	—	332
—	—	2	38
—	—	—	6

NAHUM.

1	3	2	265

HABAKKUK.

2	11	3	333
3	17,18	2	190
—	—	4	27
—	20	3	14

ZEPHANIAH.

3	17	4	358

HAGGAI.

1	5	3	121
2	6—9	1	532

ZECHARIAH.

3	1—3	3	332
7	5	—	177
—	12	4	85
9	9	2	274
—	16	4	302
11	12	1	143
12	8	2	491
13	9	—	187

MALACHI.

1	8	3	144
2	14,15	1	423
3	6	4	183
—	7	2	438
—	16,17	3	331
—	—	2	393
—	—	3	320

NEW TESTAMENT.

MATTHEW.

Ch.	Ver.	Vol.	Page.
1	21	1	467
—	27,29	—	486
3	17	—	346
—	—	—	520
5	1	4	167
—	8	1	229
—	—	—	406
—	—	3	21
—	—	—	44
—	—	—	186
—	11,12	—	54
—	16	1	411
—	18	2	258
—	20	1	424
—	29,30	—	407
—	—	2	114
—	44	1	417
—	46	2	262
6	2	—	313
—	—	3	330
—	—	4	78
—	23	1	218
—	24	—	296
—	—	2	241
—	26	3	119
—	31	1	417
—	33	—	125
—	—	3	100
—	34	2	193
7	12	1	410
—	18	—	209
—	21	—	478
—	22	3	355
8	12	1	93
9	10,11	—	487
—	28	4	117
—	33	1	486
10	22	3	437
—	28	4	26
—	29,30	2	391
—	30	—	182
—	31—33	3	364
—	33	2	247
—	—,34	3	363
—	37	1	337
—	42	2	283
11	4,5	1	484
—	12	3	122
—	29	1	425
12	25	3	30
—	35	—	137
—	36	—	328

Ch.	Ver.	Vol.	Page.
13	11	1	262
—	34,35	3	337
—	52	4	251
14	22	—	107
—	54	1	304
15	19	2	346
—	—	3	147
16	16	2	410
—	23	3	159
—	24	1	414
—	25	—	415
17	2	3	14
—	26	4	411
18	3	1	412
—	10	4	313
19	4,5,6	1	423
—	8	—	—
—	17	—	286
21	28,30	4	317
—	32	2	346
—	34,35	4	410
22	11,12	—	173
—	36	—	21
—	42	1	112
23	14	3	330
—	33	—	65
—	—	—	325
24	24	4	400
—	30,31	3	344
—	45	4	163
—	—	—	251
—	48	—	398
25	11	3	287
—	23	—	43
—	31	—	24
—	34	—	39
—	—	—	352
—	—,35	—	337
—	—36	—	365
—	41	—	69
26	24	1	326
—	28	—	325
—	—	—	373
*—	39	2	141
—	50	3	159
—	64	—	315
—	—	4	397
27	42	1	272
—	52,53	3	269
28	8	4	428

MARK.

Ch.	Ver.	Vol.	Page.
1	24	1	348
3	5	2	211
—	—	—	487
4	11	—	369
5	9	4	312
—	42	1	485
6	3	—	445
—	20	4	122
—	36	—	167
8	35	—	—
—	38	3	365
9	43—46	2	115
—	—49	3	270
—	44	1	456
—	48	—	402
*—	49	3	481
10	27	2	305
11	25,26	—	49

LUKE.

Ch.	Ver.	Vol.	Page.
1	35	1	248
—	—	—	348
—	—	—	482
—	46	3	55
—	75	4	248
—	78	—	299
2	10	2	16
—	19	—	495
—	26	3	109
—	29,30	—	259
3	38	4	298
4	13	3	33
5	8	1	245
—	—	3	170
6	14	1	401
7	15	—	486
9	22,23	4	440
—	43	1	486
—	55	4	106
10	14	2	317
—	20	—	282
—	24	3	108
—	39	4	167
11	13	3	321
—	21	4	270
—	38	1	246
12	1—23	2	345
—	4,5	1	457
—	——	3	183
—	5	—	190
—	7	2	391
—	19	1	418
—	20	2	251
—	28	3	154
—	32	4	317
—	47,48	3	338
—	—	4	448
13	28	—	160
14	18	1	230
*—	23	4	101
—	26	3	107
15	22,24	—	27
—	28	—	490
—	—	4	50
16	9	2	313
—	—	4	374
—	17	—	77
—	28	3	340
18	8	4	20
19	14	—	120
—	42	—	161
20	35	—	308
—	36	1	326
21	3,4	3	328
—	34	4	85
22	20	1	383
23	34	2	460
—	43	3	14
24	19	4	107
—	26	1	379
—	37,39,43	—	523
—	44	—	542
—	46	—	346
—	47	—	384
—	—	2	11

JOHN.

Ch.	Ver.	Vol.	Page.
1	4	2	514
—	5	—	366
—	12	1	398
—	—	3	423
—	—	4	129
—	—	—	300
—	—	—	318
—	13	3	52

Ch.	Ver.	Vol.	Page.
1	14	1	250
—	—	—	481
—	17	—	289
—	—	—	530
—	18	2	355
—	—	—	369
—	27	3	55
—	29	1	366
2	16	3	203
3	2	1	483
—	—	2	366
—	3	3	65
—	—	—	67
—	—	—	415
—	5	1	448
—	6	—	210
—	9	—	275
—	16	—	300
—	—	—	393
—	—	3	432
—	17	1	248
—	—	—	346
—	18	—	339
—	19	4	157
—	20	2	93
—	31	1	351
—	36	4	161
—	37	1	537
—	38,39	2	169
4	10	—	489
—	14	1	537
—	29	2	368
—	34	4	167
—	46	1	485
5	14	2	389
—	17	1	167
—	19	—	349
—	22	3	312
—	23	—	—
—	24	—	329
—	26,27	—	312
—	29	4	397
—	33—39	3	365
—	40	2	25
—	44	3	319
—	—	4	439
6	17	3	5
—	27	—	422
—	32	1	525
6	36	3	272
—	37	4	158
—	44	—	140
—	48	3	259
—	58	2	498
—	61	1	536
—	64	4	122
7	17	1	282
—	19	2	109
—	39	4	439
—	48	1	501
8	34	—	297
—	—,35	3	16
—	44	1	294
9	4	4	392
10	15	3	159
—	18	1	358
—	29	4	158
—	—	—	513
11	42	1	243
—	44	—	486
12	10	3	25
—	27	2	164
—	—,28	—	487
—	41	4	396
—	48	3	399
13	3	4	498
—	4	—	109
—	33	—	347
14	1	—	—
—	2	3	12
—	23,24	4	320
15	5	1	413
—	8	—	311
—	12	4	72
—	26	3	273
16	7	1	248
—	—	—	449
—	—	—	319
—	6	3	139
—	10	1	374
—	11	3	161
—	20	2	394
17	2	3	422
—	3	1	260
—	—	—	266
—	—	4	149
—	4,5	—	363
—	5	1	300
17	5	3	298
—	6	1	319
—	11	4	158
—	24	1	376
—	—	—	460
—	—	3	41
—	—	—	306
18	11	4	321
19	37	2	109
20	17	4	300
21	41	3	304

ACTS.

1	20,21	1	521
2	11	—	237
—	20	3	352
—	—	4	400
—	21	2	354
—	23	1	320
—	—	—	354
—	24	—	358
—	—	—	374
—	—	3	268
—	25	—	152
—	27	—	26
—	—29	—	371
—	38	1	318
3	12,13	—	522
—	19	—	470
—	—	4	130
—	26	1	321
—	—	—	401
—	—	—	408
—	—	2	131
4	10	1	522
—	12	—	350
—	17	—	331
5	13	4	318
—	34	4	261
—	—	—	384
—	—	—	398
—	—	2	13
—	—	—	388
—	—	3	423
—	—	4	158
—	41	1	386
—	—	3	364
7	51	2	250
9	4	1	320

Ch.	Ver.	Vol.	Page.
9	13	3	176
10	38	1	346
—	—	—	347
11	18	2	24
13	33	1	490
14	16	2	400
—	—	4	3
—	17	3	322
—	—	4	11
15	9	2	364
16	21	1	501
—	24,25	4	358
—	33	2	109
17	11	1	281
—	26	3	310
—	27,28	4	9
—	29	3	310
—	30	1	465
—	—	3	346
—	31	—	369
—	32	—	211
—	—,34	—	367
18	5	1	337
19	19,20	2	100
20	21	3	280
—	24	4	259
—	28	1	351
—	30	2	493
24	25	3	249
26	13	1	517
—	18	—	471
—	—	2	52
—	—	3	420

ROMANS.

1	4	1	490
—	—	—	520
—	—	3	273
—	11	—	268
—	17	1	396
—	18	2	38
—	19,20	—	369
—	20	1	268
—	—	—	327
—	21	—	251
—	—	3	210
—	21—23	1	111
—	22	—	251
—	—	3	210

Ch.	Ver.	Vol.	Page.
1	23	1	252
—	26,27	3	321
—	29,30	—	65
—	30	1	290
—	31	—	392
2	4	—	233
—	—	2	214
—	—	—	262
—	—	3	322
—	5	—	327
—	7	1	406
—	—	4	402
—	—	1	470
—	—	3	8
—	—	—	59
—	—	—	336
—	—	—	348
—	—	—	437
—	—	4	308
—	7,8	3	68
—	12	—	321
—	15	1	258
—	—	—	425
—	16	3	151
—	—	—	327
—	—	—	420
—	18	—	318
3	2	4	103
—	4	1	241
—	5	3	312
—	—	1	470
—	——	3	495
—	7	1	400
—	10	—	—
—	23	—	211
—	24	—	269
—	25	—	254
—	—	2	388
—	—,26	1	364
—	27	3	414
4	16	2	19
—	25	1	491
—	—	3	268
5	1	2	364
—	—	3	23
—	2	—	—
—	3	—	24
—	6	1	291
—	7	—	311

Ch.	Ver.	Vol.	Page.
5	7	2	413
—	8	1	290
—	—	2	409
—	—	3	159
—	10	1	290
—	—	—	320
—	12	3	241
—	12,17	1	209
—	14	—	208
—	15	—	288
—	18,19	—	249
—	19	—	199
—	—	—	208
—	—	—	347
—	25	2	423
6	1	1	470
—	4	—	373
—	—	—	491
—	22	3	17
—	23	1	209
—	—	—	414
—	—	3	41
—	—	—	241
—	—	—	336
—	—	—	53
7	10	4	42
—	12	1	192
—	—	3	317
8	1	2	29
—	—	3	271
—	2	2	491
—	3	1	303
—	—	—	319
—	—	—	348
—	—	4	300
—	7	1	210
—	—,8	—	226
—	9	—	249
—	—	3	277
—	10	—	264
—	11	—	277
—	13	2	258
—	—	3	191
—	15	—	250
—	—	4	289
—	17	1	268
—	—	3	45
—	—	—	418
—	18	2	244

Ch.	Ver.	Vol.	Page.
8	18	2	161
—	—	3	83
—	20	1	204
—	21	3	109
—	22	1	255
—	—	3	11
—	23	—	270
—	28	1	127
—	—	—	418
—	—	2	165
—	—	—	189
—	—	—	394
—	29	—	180
—	30	—	12
—	—	3	423
—	—	4	368
—	32	2	156
—	34,35	1	379
—	37	—	322
—	—	3	30
—	38	1	320
—	—	3	105
9	2	2	457
—	4,5	4	103
—	14	1	470
—	16	3	413
—	18	1	368
—	—	3	413
10	3	4	121
—	4	1	400
—	—	—	534
—	6,7	—	270
—	——,9	—	396
—	8	4	117
—	9	2	40
—	—	3	363
11	20,21	2	259
—	35	1	190
—	36	—	189
12	1	—	52
—	—	—	190
—	—	—	195
—	11	4	248
—	12	1	418
13	1	—	313
—	—	—	409
—	3	—	—
—	8,9	—	415
—	13,14	—	476
13	14	2	88
—	16	3	331
14	10,11	—	344
—	17	—	22
—	—	4	434
—	—,18	1	422
15	4	4	99
—	10	3	23
—	13	—	83
16	5	1	259

I CORINTHIANS.

Ch.	Ver.	Vol.	Page.
1	27—29	1	252
—	3	—	272
—	10	2	296
—	12	—	352
—	13	1	359
—	19,20	—	274
—	21	2	370
—	23	—	241
—	—,24	1	251
—	30	—	358
—	—	—	366
—	—	3	423
2	2	1	268
—	4	—	266
—	7	1	252
—	8	—	351
—	9	—	229
—	—	—	257
—	—	—	461
—	10	—	259
—	14	—	273
—	—	4	115
3	18	3	198
—	22,23	—	87
4	5	—	149
—	—	—	349
—	17	—	364
5	7	1	—
—	11	3	440
—	15	1	208
6	5	3	24
—	9,10	—	440
—	——	—	67
—	10	4	170
—	11	1	382
—	17	3	272
6	19,20	1	411
—	——	3	6
7	30,31	2	279
—	31	3	80
9	11	2	77
—	27	3	368
10	4	1	536
—	11	4	399
—	13	1	322
—	—	2	161
—	31	1	411
—	—	4	75
—	33	3	258
11	13	1	413
—	31	—	318
—	32	—	388
—	—	2	30
—	—	—	169
—	—	4	98
12	8	1	521
—	28	2	353
13	1	—	477
—	2	1	282
—	8	3	36
—	—	—	436
—	12	1	327
—	—	3	262
—	—	—	378
15	—	1	381
—	14	—	490
—	21	—	515
—	22	—	249
—	—	3	272
—	—	—	423
—	25	1	378
—	28	3	47
—	44	—	25
—	45	1	326
—	46	—	213
—	47	—	326
—	49	—	249
—	50	—	326
—	54	3	270
—	55	—	103
—	56	—	257
—	58	—	103
—	—	4	415
16	14	2	413

II CORINTHIANS.

Ch.	Ver.	Vol.	Page.
1	3	1	285
—	5	2	161
—	12	3	30
—	—	—	358
—	21	1	251
—	22	3	92
2	4	1	504
—	12	2	387
3	7	1	451
—	18	—	266
—	—	—	270
—	—	—	447
—	—	2	486
4	1	—	396
—	3,4	—	380
—	4	—	223
—	—	4	37
—	7	1	506
—	17	—	419
—	—	—	463
—	—	2	163
—	—	—	383
—	—	3	83
—	—	4	401
—	18	3	108
—	—	—	467
5	1	2	366
—	—	3	302
—	—	4	307
—	4	3	85
—	5	4	373
—	9	3	356
—	—	4	414
—	10	1	515
—	—	3	174
—	11	—	255
—	14	—	280
—	17	—	277
—	19	1	366
—	20	—	399
—	—	2	20
—	21	1	349
—	—	2	18
—	—	3	121
—	28	4	380
6	2	3	201
—	10,11	1	507
6	17	1	405
—	18	3	101
*7	1	2	295
—	—	3	101
—	—	—	177
—	—	—	414
—	3	4	432
—	6	2	199
—	10	1	232
—	35	2	79
8	9	1	287
—	—	—	302
—	12	3	337
9	6	4	406
—	19,20	1	424
10	4,5	4	105
—	5	1	278
—	—	2	380
12	4	3	14
—	7	1	386
—	—,8	—	19
—	9	2	161
13	7	—	157

GALATIANS.

Ch.	Ver.	Vol.	Page.
1	4	1	347
—	7	—	401
2	10	—	312
—	14	4	107
—	20	2	411
—	—	3	272
3	4,5	1	383
—	6	4	300
—	10	1	193
—	—	—	397
—	11	—	400
—	13	—	357
—	—	3	158
—	—	—	258
4	4,5	1	353
—	——	4	299
—	7	3	418
5	2,11	1	407
—	11	2	241
—	17	—	28
—	19—21	—	49
—	22	1	450
—	—	2	310
—	24	—	75
6	4	2	508
—	7	1	406
—	—,8	3	336
—	10	1	415
—	14	—	395

EPHESIANS.

Ch.	Ver.	Vol.	Page.
1	5	1	249
—	6	3	40
—	8	—	61
—	9	1	259
—	—	2	369
—	11	1	418
—	—	2	163
—	12	3	105
—	17	2	380
—	18—20	1	493
—	21	—	315
—	—	—	378
—	—	2	443
2	2	—	223
—	3	1	208
—	4	—	285
—	—	—	26
—	5	—	289
—	6	3	269
—	8	2	19
—	—	—	24
—	10	3	6
—	12	1	260
—	—	4	105
—	18	1	244
3	4	—	259
—	—	2	369
—	10	1	240
—	—	—	259
—	—	4	188
—	17	3	423
—	18	1	295
—	19	2	372
4	8	1	449
—	—	2	131
—	17—19	—	233
—	—,18	1	426
—	18	—	218
—	19	2	279
—	20	1	476
—	24	—	218
—	27	2	309

Ch.	Ver.	Vol.	Page.
5	2	1	311
—	—	—	305
—	26,27	3	17
—	14	2	513
—	27	1	407
6	5	—	411
—	7	4	249
—	12	1	487
—	18	3	124

PHILIPPIANS.

1	20	3	352
—	21	—	87
—	23	—	42
—	—	—	86
—	—	—	306
—	29	1	386
2	3	2	339
—	5	3	154
—	——,8	1	300
—	6	—	250
—	—	—	301
—	—	—	351
—	8	3	257
—	—,9	—	422
—	12	1	412
—	—	—	458
—	—	3	177
—	—	—	190
—	—,13	—	200
—	13	1	319
—	—	3	56
—	14	4	432
3	1	—	209
—	8	1	269
—	9	—	398
—	—	—	400
—	—	2	18
—	10,11	4	75
—	13,14	3	100
—	——	—	432
—	14	—	106
—	18—20	4	440
—	21	3	42
—	—	—	87
—	—	—	88
—	—	—	89
—	—	4	397
4	5	—	414

Ch.	Ver.	Vol.	Page.
4	6,7	2	395
—	7	4	23
—	8	1	406
—	11,12	2	454
—	12	—	271
—	—	—	295
—	13	—	364
—	18	1	411

COLOSSIANS.

1	6	1	511
—	11	2	202
—	12	1	247
—	—	3	251
—	—	4	73
—	13	—	324
—	14	1	358
—	—	—	371
—	17	—	428
—	20	4	323
—	26,27	1	262
2	2	4	433
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—	14	—	354
—	—	—	380
—	—	3	257
—	18	—	228
—	19	2	378
3	3	—	314
—	—	—	267
—	5,8	—	300
—	9,10	—	297
—	11	3	335
—	13	1	417
—	24	4	249
—	25	3	328
—	—	—	335
4	2	4	124
—	3	2	369

I THESSALONI.

1	5	2	104
—	9	1	506
2	5	2	315
3	8	4	432
4	2	2	400
—	5	4	414
—	13	3	98
—	—	—	303

Ch.	Ver.	Vol.	Page.
4	14	3	458
—	16	—	367
*—	17	4	205

II THESSALONI.

1	6,7	3	60
—	10	1	517
—	—	3	89
2	13	2	379
6	7	3	348

I TIMOTHY.

1	9	2	369
—	11	1	236
—	15	2	16
—	16	—	39
—	17	—	103
—	18	—	400
2	2	1	409
—	—	2	523
—	5	1	377
—	6	—	358
—	—	3	256
3	16	1	242
—	—	—	482
—	—	—	490
—	—	—	511
4	14,15	4	252
5	17	2	523
6	6	1	418
—	9	2	256
—	13	—	243
—	16	3	329
—	17	2	196
—	——19	—	283
—	18,19	—	323
—	——	3	491
—	19	—	100

II TIMOTHY.

1	2	1	281
—	7	3	230
—	—	—	320
—	10	1	404
—	12	3	60
—	—	3	309
2	1	2	223
—	11,12	—	243
—	14	4	231

Ch.	Ver.	Vol.	Page.
2	26	1	297
—	—	—	298
—	*ult.*	—	297
4	1,2	4	164
—	——	—	258
—	5—8	3	336
—	7,8	—	105
—	8	—	109

TITUS.

Ch.	Ver.	Vol.	Page.
1	2	4	434
—	15	2	236
2	9,10	3	109
—	10	1	411
—	11,12	—	466
—	—	—	280
—	——	—	122
—	12,13	3	352
—	13	1	247
—	—	—	325
—	14	—	347
—	—	—	466
—	—	—	469
3	3	—	220
—	—	2	274
—	5	1	448
—	7	4	368

PHILEMON.

Ch.	Ver.	Vol.	Page.
1	18	3	55

HEBREWS.

Ch.	Ver.	Vol.	Page.
1	2	1	248
—	3	—	249
—	—	—	371
—	—	—	379
—	—	4	300
—	4,5	3	237
—	5	4	300
—	6	1	287
—	—	3	228
—	7	—	—
—	8	—	—
—	9	—	316
—	10	—	238
—	13	—	—
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—	—	3	239
2	7,8	3	282
—	8	1	511
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—	11	1	243
—	—	—	246
—	—	3	230
—	14	1	488
* —	15	3	237
—	—	—	187
—	16	—	53
3	7	2	248
—	12	—	244
—	13	4	85
4	2	2	238
—	4	3	1
* —	9	—	—
—	12	4	144
—	13	3	329
—	14	2	160
—	15	1	244
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5	9	1	388
6	1	2	355
—	—	3	280
—	17	1	310
—	—,18	—	530
—	18	2	20
—	—	—	367
7	—,19	—	491
—	19	1	379
—	21	—	346
—	22	—	353
—	25	—	266
—	26	—	444
—	—,27	—	349
8	1	—	378
—	6	—	317
—	10	—	321
—	—	3	414
—	12	1	319
9	4	—	367
—	—	—	375
—	18	—	368
—	—,14	—	364
—	——	—	371
—	14	2	29
—	22	1	362
—	—	—	393
9	25,26	1	380
—	26	—	376
—	——,28	—	378
—	27	3	242
—	—	—	249
—	28	1	544
10	1	—	364
—	2	—	372
—	5,6,7	—	312
—	6,7	—	347
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—	—	—	380
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—	—	—	424
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—	28,29	—	—
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—	—	—	384
—	—	3	301
—	—	—	454
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—	—	—	184
—	10	—	10
—	—	—	11
—	19	—	132
—	25	1	223
—	26	2	284
—	37,38	1	452
12	1	2	174
—	2	1	287
—	—	2	173
—	—	3	191
—	3	2	171
—	4	—	161
—	5	—	269
—	6	1	387
—	—	2	156
—	9	—	155
—	—	4	89

Ch.	Ver.	Vol.	Page.
12	10	1	388
—	—	2	157
—	—	3	258
—	11	2	30
—	—	—	162
—	—	—	195
—	14	3	21
—	—	—	181
—	—	—	420
—	22	—	35
—	—	—	37
—	23	1	397
—	—	3	20
—	—	4	373
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—	28	3	9
—	—,29	—	181
—	——	—	190
13	5	1	417
—	7—17	2	523
—	8	1	381
—	16	—	411
—	—	4	75
—	20	1	374
—	—	—	383

JAMES.

1	2,3	2	161
—	5	—	202
—	6	—	198
—	10	—	273
—	12	—	163
—	14	—	75
—	15	—	224
—	17	—	489
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—	—	—	414
—	13	1	285
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—	15	—	203
4	1	2	217
—	8	—	96
—	—	—	298
—	—	—	299
—	—	3	101
—	11	4	38
—	17	3	327
—	3,4	—	333
—	8	2	181
—	10	—	173
—	16	—	354
—	17	4	406

I PETER.

1	7	1	385
—	—	2	160
—	—	3	61
—	—	—	349
—	8	2	187
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—	—	—	263
—	—	—	271
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—	25	4	171
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—	9	—	264
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—	11,12	3	367
—	12	4	271
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—	4,5	4	407
—	5	3	328
—	12	2	198
—	14	1	241
—	—	—	386
5	2,3	2	77
—	6	—	155
—	8	—	128

II PETER.

1	4	1	70
—	—	2	213
—	—	—	306
—	—	3	52
—	5	1	408
—	8	3	213
—	12	1	543
—	17	3	372
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—	—	2	114
3	4,8	4	401
—	5	2	232
—	—	4	118
—	9	3	350
—	—	—	471
—	18	—	11

I JOHN.

1	1	1	523
—	3	3	300
—	5	1	520
—	7	—	366
2	1	—	318

Ch.	Ver.	Vol.	Page.
2	2	1	361
—	—	—	376
—	4	2	382
—	16	—	72
—	—	—	213
—	—	3	78
—	17	1	92
—	—	3	80
—	—	4	170
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—	—	—	476
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—	—	3	263
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—	10	—	189
—	—	—	290
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—	17	3	187
—	18	2	245
—	—	3	187
4	18	3	363
—	19	2	245
*5	2	4	67
—	3	4	75
—	—	—	319
—	4	2	244
—	—	—	382
—	5	1	337
—	6,7	—	156
—	10	2	379
—	12	3	271
—	—	—	423
—	13	2	388

JUDE.

Ch.	Ver.	Vol.	Page.
1	13	3	73
—	14,15	—	328
—	—	—	344
—	15	—	367
—	19	2	228
—	21	3	53
—	—	—	336

REVELATION.

Ch.	Ver.	Vol.	Page.
1	4	4	182
—	5	3	53
—	—	—	278
—	—	4	327
—	9	3	367
—	14	—	329
—	17	—	82
2	9	1	478
—	10	3	8
—	—	—	59
—	—	—	436
3	2	4	406
—	12	2	160
—	17	2	321
—	—	—	330
—	19	—	269
—	21	1	462
—	—	2	173
—	—	3	33
—	—	4	272
4	3	1	402
—	—	3	162
4	11	1	288
—	—	4	41
5	2,5	3	312
—	9	1	359
—	13	—	331
—	—	3	21
7	9	2	174
—	10	3	107
—	14	—	336
—	17	—	73
8	3	—	357
12	10	—	332
13	8	1	364
—	—	—	381
—	10	2	186
14	13	1	389
—	—	3	29
—	—	—	66
15	2	3	9
—	3	—	32
—	4	—	170
16	5	4	411
—	9	2	168
—	10	3	74
—	10,11	—	497
—	21	—	74
17	2	—	373
18	7	2	263
—	13	1	296
19	2,3	3	327
—	7	4	359
—	15	—	105
20	6	3	258
—	11	—	317
—	12	—	328
—	—	—	337
—	—	4	407
21	4	1	460
—	—	4	208
—	8	3	224
—	—	—	251
—	—	4	93
—	—	2	243
22	5	1	462
—	—	4	399
—	11	3	17

GENERAL INDEX.

Note.——The Roman letters refer to the Volume: viz. a. for the first volume, b. for the second, c. for the third, and d. for the fourth; and where no volume is marked, it belongs to that which is mentioned last. ——The figures refer to the Page.

ABILITY, our, derived from Christ, b 298.

Ablutions under the law figured sanctification, &c. a 161.

Abraham, his obedience, b 359.

Abstaining from the practice of a besetting sin proves that it has not the dominion over a man, 95.—from a beloved lust, sure sign of uprightness, 101.

Abuse of God's grace pernicious, a 471.

Acknowledgment and admiration of the Deity, duty man owes him, 43.

Actions, human, the two great springs of 201.—a daily review of, useful, d 412.

Adam, how created, a—nature, unveiled to him,—his knowledge, 188.—his situation in paradise, d 188.—a murderer, a—his sin perfectly voluntary,—had power to persevere in a holy state,—in him no impulsion to sin, 200.—allured and not forced by satan,—his compliance contrasted with Christ's resistance of tempation.—his disobedience voluntary, 201.—vanquished by a single temptation, 202. dreadful effects of his sin, 203.—his guilt, all mankind involved in, 207.—his sin so fatal to posterity, objections to it answered, 212.—unable to restore himself by his natural power, 217.—guilty of the highest robbery, 250.

Admirable effects produced by the gospel prove its authenticity, a 162.

Admonition, private, a means of recovering sinners, b 238.—disregarded by the prosperous, 239.—a duty that requires great prudence, 486.

Adoption conferred upon us in regeneration, a 405.—we are the sons of God by, d 299.

Adversity, what will make us firm against its impressions, b 187.

Affection of God evidenced in denying some of our petitions, b 440.

Affections must be drawn upwards by grace, a 419.—of the mind, 434.—sorrowful, a twofold excess of, b—excess in degrees of them,—continuance of them, 148.—sensual are bad counsellors, c 450.

Afflictions should be patiently borne from hope of future bliss, c 82. Ibid. d 229.—terminated by death, c 260.—a fixed aim at heaven will reconcile us to them, 451.

Afflictions, why believers are liable to them, a—their utility, 385.—compared to the red sea, 388.—of God's people, fruits of them, b. 30. like Aaron's rod that budded,—temptations attend them, 143.—considered in a natural and moral respect, 144.—however severe, we deserve greater, 151.—intolerable or light, according to our apprehension of them, 191.—in them God greatly honours his people, 195.—christians under them should recur to his blessings,—christians should compare their state with the wicked, 196.—christians taught how to profit by them, 204.—tend to reclaim men, 240.—excluded from heaven, c 25.—Ibid. 375.—Ibid. d 207.—how to bear them, 81.—contempt of them, 82.—whence contempt of them proceeds, 84.—evils resulting from a contempt of afflictions, 89.—duties proper to that state, 93.—a trial of faith, 98.

Afflicted believers, a dangerous temptation of theirs, b 186.
Afflicting evils, how in their approach to compose our spirits, 487.
Agonies of a guilty conscience on a death-bed, 115.
Air, its usefulness, a 9.—proves the existence and wisdom of God, d 7.
Alchymists, their folly, b 251.
Alexander, refusal of his soldiers to cross the ocean, a 85.—refused to see a beautiful captive, why, answered, b 469.—his great love to Hephestion, c 397.—his liberality, 410.—his insatiable ambition, a 223.
All-sufficiency of God supplies the wants of saints, d 27.—of Christ in what it consists, 146.
Allusion to a merchant in a tempest, a 87.
Ambition, what ought to be a christian's, 176.—the insatiable of Alexander, 223.—when proper and when sinful, d 280.
Ambrose St., an observation of, a 267.
Anecdote, of atheists in a defeated Persian army,—of Tullus Hostilius, —of Bion the philosopher, 36.—of Herofilus and Diadonus Cronus, 37. —of Sophocles and his unnatural sons, 42.—of Tiberius and Carnulius, 48.—Diagorus and his servant, 77.—Popilius and Antiochus, 100. —Demades and the Athenians, 138. —of the duke Biron, 163.—of Zaleucus, 360.—Possidonius the Stoic, 436.—Polemo in the school of Zenocrates, 451.—Mutius Scevola, 510. —Zeuxes, b 78.—Scipio the Roman general, 110.—Stilpon the philosopher, 169.—Augustus the emperor, 198.—Pelopidas and Epaminondas, 201.—Philip king of Macedonia, 320.—Torquatus Manlius, 390.—Antigonus, 395.
Angels cannot penetrate the divine counsels, a 259.—not such favourites as man, 316.—their first state, 291.—fall,—punishment,—fallen most imminent examples of divine wrath, 292.—why no provision made for their recovery, 293.—not qualified to redeem man, 350.—for one sin doomed eternally to perish, b 39.
Angels of light more distinguished by love than light, 396.—propounded to us a pattern for imitation, 477.—inspire holy thoughts, 478.—obey God more readily, 479.—their example, some say is above our level, 480.—how named the sons of God, d 69.—cannot claim a reward from God, 273.
Anger, a lust of the flesh, b—no passion less capable of counsel,—productive of tremendous and extensive mischief,—how to prevent its rise and reign, 307.—divests some men of humanity,—we should try to overcome it in others by meekness,—those addicted to it should be doubly watchful, 308.—it is becoming a rational being to defer it, 309.
Angry man suffers more torments than his worst enemy can inflict upon him, 309.
Animals, kinds, shapes and properties prove a God, a 12.
Apollinaris and Eunomius, their objection to Christ's divinity, 64.
Apollonius Tyanœus, his pretended miracles, 136.
Apostles, their character as to integrity and soundness of judgment, 140.—were sincere and certain in their testimony,—their testimony equal to demonstrances, 141.
Apostles and reformers preached the same doctrine. 460.
Appetites, carnal, their dangerous influence, c 449.
Arabia, traveller in the deserts of, allusion to, a 87.
Aretius a painter, story of, c 447.
Arian persecution in, the rich professors yield, b 246.
Aristotle, quotation from, a 8.—a supposition of his, 31.—an observation of his, 107.
Aristotle's view of happiness, 129 — on the best laws for government, 175.—assertions as to moral habits, 226.—his obscure notions of Deity, 428.
Arguments and motives to excite us to grow in grace, b 471.
Armour of the christian, 517.
Ascent, into heaven and intercession prove the completeness of his sacrifice, a 374.
Ashurst, Mr. Benjamin, his funeral sermon, d 393.—his excellent character, 415.
Atheism, fearful of discovery, a 3.—
Atheist, acknowledgment of an, a 11. —story of an, c 75.
Atheists, few of them, a 3 —most men practical, 33.—speculative,—their

doubts, 35.—their awful situation, d 19.—anecdote of some the Persian soldiery, a 36.

Athens anciently considered the grand mart of felicity, 128.—Paul's little success in that city, 500.

Athenians advised to cut off the thumbs of the inhabitants of Egina, b 226.

Attributes of God, their harmony in redemption by Christ, a 181.—a sweet concurrence of them all, 239.

Augustus, the emperor, anecdote of, b 198.

Austin, St. confounds the atheist, a 26.—an excellent remark of, 50.—striking, passages from his writings, 103.—an observation of, 143.—his answer to an adversary, 215.—his singular prayer, 227.—observation of, respecting the difference between filial and slavish fear, c 178.—slavish fear, 224.

Author, an advice to, 465.

Avicen an observation of his, a 115.

Avoid, engaging company that would corrupt, b 518.

Awful state of the damned, 116.

B

Backsliding, remarks on, c 439.

Bates, Dr. his memoir, prefixed to the 1 vol.—his funeral sermon by Howe, d 423.—his character by Howe, 442.

Baxter, Rev. Richard, his funeral sermon, 297.—his character, 324.—his early piety,—had not a University education,—fixed at Kidderminster,—his usefulness at that place,—his prayers peculiarly affecting, 325.—his sermons of what nature,—despised flashy oratory,—his diligence in catechising, 326.—publishes Gildas Salvianus,—unites ministers of various denominations in Worcestershire,—comes to London and settles there, 327.—engaged in the Savoy conference,—anecdote of his fortitude when engaged in the ministry,—removes from St. Dunstan's to Black Friars, 329.—involved in the calamity occasioned by the act of uniformity, 330.—account of his books, 331.—remarkable sanctity of his life,—his humility, 334.—self-denial,—patience, 335.—pacific spirit,—love to the souls of men, 336.—sickness and death, 337.

Beasts, not possessed with a rational soul, a 66.—excel man in vivacity of the powers of sense, 70.

Bedford, duke of, dedications to him, d 179.—419.

Believers secure in Christ, a 323.—a glorious reward promised to, 324.—the nature and duration of the reward they shall enjoy, 325.—their reception into heaven, proof of perfection of Christ's sacrifice, 383.—sincere shall obtain a final victory and reward, b 133.—their title as dearly beloved, 296.—Christ's servants by solemn covenant, d 271.—should act according to their state and future hopes, 375.—their conversation should be in heaven, 376.

Benefits, temporal, God's design in dispensing them, b.—their abuse, leads to fatal consequences, 214.—God's bestowed upon us,—their principle,—greatness, 404.

Bernard, St. an expression of his on liberty and necessity, a 228.

Biron, duke, an anecdote of, 163.

Blessedness, future, c 261.—described by sensible representations, d 296.

Blood of Christ, its undecaying virtue, a 125.—the eating of, forbidden in the law, why, 378.

Blood, as well as milky, way leads to God's throne, 419.

Body and soul, their sympathy, 79.—degrading to pamper it, and neglect the soul, 98.—the evils to which it is liable through sin, 206.—the natural incapable of celestial life, c 265.—the human, its formation proves the existence and wisdom of God, d 9.—of the saint will be raised and glorified, 278.

Books of the New Testament cannot be falsified, a 117.—of Record will be opened in the Day of Judgment, c 328.

Brazen serpent, a type of Christ, a 387.

Breast of a dispassionate man is the temple of peace, b 309.

Broken and contrite heart, blessedness of, 194.

Brutus' exclamation on his defeat in battle, a 77.

Business and pleasures of the world causes of carnal security, c 65.—should be no hinderance to meditation, 122.—divert the mind from considerations of death, 253.

C

Calamities of the world the consequences of sin, a 206.

Caligula, a character of him, a 98.
Callings, wherein men are engaged influence their moral character, b— different, the temptations which attend them, 76—those to be chosen least subject to temptation, 79.
Carbuncles, some ministers like them, d 235.
Carthage, after its destruction the Romans degenerated, a 73.
Carnal mind insensible of its wretchedness, 218.—persons retain a cold remembrance of God's benefits b 65.—men forsake one sin to embrace another, 102.—pretences are used to excuse sins of intemperance, 302.—men under the influence of the senses, 450.—man cannot take the delight experienced by the saint, 482.—greedy in desire of temporal blessings, 489.
Causes, all subordinate, sustained by fresh influence from the first, a 8.—moral of habitual sin, b 75.
Celsus, his objections against Christ, a 272.
Cesarius, a primitive christian, a reflection of his, b 184.
Chance, folly of attributing the origin of the world to it, a 8.
Characters, of the saints in the Old Testament, a 544.
Charles the fifth, in declining age sought the shade of a cloister, 73.
Chastisements, the effects of God's paternal love, b 156.—proved,—God's design in sending them, 157.—work of conversion carried on by them, 158.—by them God designs to illustrate the graces of his people, 160. God's providence and grace in them, 161.—their blessed issue,—produce present and future glory, 162.—arranged by infinite wisdom, 163.—tend to glorify God. 164.
Child of God, may walk in darkness, 446.
Children of God, how they are formed, d 69.
Christ the word, his testimony, a 156. appears to Saul going to Damascus,—to John the apostle, 157.—his power to open the grave, 158.—his side pierced, why recited by the apostle John, 160.—state of the heathen world at his advent,—his blood, its effects, 162.—the special character of his religion, 168.—Porphiry's testimony to the truth of his life,—his external mean state worthy of him,—his design in coming into the world,—to redeem men,—to found a spiritual kingdom,—his example of excellent use, 169.—assures his people of a blessed retribution, d 246.—an example of perfect obedience, a—exhibited virtues from the lowest to the most heroic, 175.—many professed disciples of, inconsistent in their life, 176.—harmony of divine attributes in his work, 181.—a sympathizing Mediator, 244.—his offices,—a Priest, 243—a Prophet, 244.—a King, 246.—came from the bosom of his father, 244.—his sceptre amiable to his subjects. 246.—will be as tender to men when he comes in judgment, as when he suffered on the cross. 247.—unites the glorious titles of Creator and Redeemer, 248.—as a son, most fit to restore man to favour.—and Adam, comparison between, 249.—way in which he attacked and triumphed over satan, 252.—caught satan in his own snares, 253.—his death of infinite value, 254.—love in assuming our nature,—previous glory, 300—amazing condescension, 301.—took our nature after it had lost its primitive innocence,—his love manifested in his sufferings, 303.—how sinners die brought to him, d 145.—sufferings enlarged upon. a 304.—union with him the source of spiritual blessings, c 271. why he is appointed the judge of men, 312.—his presence joyful to glorified saints, 393.—the sufferings of his soul, a 304.—body, 307.—knew sin in all its horrors, 304.—the wrath of God inflamed against him,—derelictlon of him on the cross, a great and terrible mystery, 305.—sorrows of his forsaken state, great, 306.—his death shows the greatness of his love,—its ignominy, 307.—pain,—crucifixion described, 308.—comparison between and Isaac, 309.—his readiness to save us magnifies his love, 312.—our salvation amiable to him in his agony, 313.—the christian's inviolable sanctuary, 323.—more amiable on the cross than on the throne, 336.—our love to him must be sincere,—supreme, 337.—not merely a martyr, but a mediator,—divine justice glorified in his death, 352.—his death, how represented in scripture,—a price to redeem from hell,—a sacrifice to reconcile us to God, 353.—how his

temporary sufferings were equivalent to eternal, 356.—had full power to dispose of his life,—would not finally perish,—an infinite good redounds from his sufferings,—his death the price which redeems us, 358.—the dependance which his glory had upon his humiliation, 377.—does not save men in their sins, b 118.—how we are to love him, 411.—love of, its mighty effects in us, 412.—his law enjoins love, 414.—his life, a globe of precepts and model of perfection, 474.—two examples of his proposed for imitation, 486.—his presence in heaven, a part of the felicity of the saints, c 41.—his duty proved, 237.—his obedience the meritorious cause of salvation, 411.—his first and second coming contrasted, d 395.

Christian religion proved, a 105.—compared with other religions, 108.—delineated in its doctrines, promises and precepts, 119, and 131.—excellent above all others,—its design and effect, 471.—renders men like angels,—none dare condemn its morals,—its glorious effects, 473.

Christian charity, a 416.—love forgiving injuries, an excellent effect of, b 419.—every, a builder, 429.—the conversation of worldly men dangerous to him, d 111.

Christian, his state preferable to Adam's innocency, a 314.—a son of God, promise annexed to that title, b 438.—this relation gives an adoptive freedom, 439.—is not an empty title, 441.—the inheritance he is entitled to, 442.—

Christianity, its external proofs, a—its miracles, 132.—proved by accomplishments of prophecy, 142.

Christians, many so merely in title, a 107.—the first rejoiced in martyrdom, 151.—primitive, the greatest heroes, 162.—their unshaken resolution in death, 163.—exhorted to holiness, 475.—inconsistent unless they are holy, 477.—may confirm their faith as to future promises, from accomplishment of those that are past, 544.—excited to subdue their lusts, 110.—cannot by any calamity be made miserable, b 189.—God can make them truly happy in his love, 190.—in affliction, should pray frequently and fervently, 198.—shall compare themselves with themselves,—others, 512.—the nearer they approach to heaven the more is its attractive force felt,—should seriously think on the approaches of death and judgment, 526.

Chrysostom, quotations from in Greek, a 152.—dull when preaching to a thin auditory,—breathed fire when surrounded with a numerous assembly, b 17.—letter to Ciriacus, c 298.—exultation on the influence of religion in death, d—a striking remonstrance of his, 230.

Cicero's censure of Homer, a 110.—why more virtuous than Cataline, 211.—how he aggravates the cruelty of Verres, 308.

Church of Christ, what it is and what its members should be, d 247.

Civil, duties, b 523.

Clarkson, Rev. Mr. his funeral sermon, d 347.—his excellent character, 383.

Closet, duties, love to them exhibits grace in the heart, b 459.—motives that influence in them, 460.

Cold a, preacher makes a careless hearer, d 252.

Comforts of the soul increased by meditation, c 133.

Command, the first and great, love to God, b 402.

Communion, with God promoted by meditation, c 155.—makes death less fearful, 300.—with saints and angels in heaven, 395.

Comparison, an encouraging one, d 229.—between the world and sin, a 90.

Compassionate sympathy of Christ with his afflicted people, b 190.—

Composure under painful trials, happy instance of, b 148.

Compulsion, its religion, its folly, and injustice, d 105.

Concealing and excusing our sins learned from Adam, b 42.

Condition, vindication of the term, d 131.

Confession, necessary in order, b—must be free and ingenuous,—sincere and full, 41.—with sorrow and shame, 42.—self-condemnation,—prayer for pardon, 45.—must be with forsaking of sin, 48.

Confidence, in God, blessedness of, a 55.

Confirming grace, emanation from the Holy Spirit, b 125.

Connexion of divine truths, b 373.—of the passions discovers the predominant lust, 74.

Conquest over our lusts the most noble effect of divine grace, b 113.

Conscience, its power, a 31.—the disquiets of, not external impressions, 34.—its double power, 84.—what it was in man's pristine state, 186.—wounded by sensual pleasures,—man tries to disarm it, 221.—uses many pretexts to satisfy it,—endeavours to drown its voice like Cain,—incapable of restraining man, 222.—freed from terror, b 29.—a guilty one begins the sinner's hell in this world, 115.—what its design, 231.—its testimony neglected by the prosperous sinner, 235.—the frequent discussion of, promotes piety, 508.—averse to it, why men are,—what necessary, that it may perform its office, 509.—dreads death, c 249.—will give its testimony at the day of judgment, 331.—attests the existence of God, d 11.—A guilty one accuses of the most secret crimes and tortures the greatest men, 13.

Consent, our, to serve Christ must be deliberate, entire and permanent, d 281.

Consequences of Christ's coming foretold, a—that the Jews should regret him,—Levitical ceremonies should cease,—idols should be ruined, not idolaters converted, 533.—of and seeking forgiveness, b 40.—of intemperance and impurity, 301.

Consideration, of a future judgment, c 344.—of eternal realities, 457.—must be serious, frequent and accompanied with self application, 459.—is a pleasant employment of the mind, 462.—the carnal mind averse to it, 463.

Considerations proper at the Lord's Table, b 504.

Constancy in religion, its importance, b 351.

Contentment in every state enjoined by the gospel, a 417.

Contrary states into which dying persons pass, a 315.

Contrast between the senses and the soul, 60.—Adam and the martyrs, 392.

Conversion of the soul, the greatest of all miracles, 153.—set forth by the word *αναγεννησις*, 298.—of the world to christianity requires a great power,—difficulties in the way of it, 493.

Conversion, the necessity of divine grace to effect it, d 138.

Conviction of sin the beginning of conversion, 144.

Corruption hereditarily transmitted, a 209.—of nature works variously in men,—why its visible acts are different,—voluntary and culpable, 211.—of nature does not extenuate guilt, b 69.—not a mere privation of holiness, 297.

Corrupt nature in scripture denominated flesh, why, b 71.—custom, its tyranny violent, b 84.

Court life, like a leaky ship, b 80.

Covenant, God entered into with Adam,—displayed admirable goodness,—wisdom,—the terms of, a 192.—penalty of its breach,—constitution of, on what founded, 193.—with Adam, its prohibition, 194.—terms of the first not objectionable, 215.—first, did not accept of repentance,—its final voice, do or die, 233.—new, promise of heaven peculiar to it, 324.—upon what its stability is founded, 319.—secured by the efficacy of divine grace, 320.—founded on the love of God, 319.—new, glory of God and comfort of christians deeply concerned in it, 323.—of works and of grace, distinguished, &c. b 470.

Covetous, the, are inordinate in their endeavours to get riches,—sordid in saving, and rob God and man,—defective in using riches, 312.—want to compound with God,—defective in the manner of giving, 313.—harden their hearts against the claims of the miserable,—will not give in proportion to their abilities,—doubly guilty of feigned poverty and real avarice, 314.—the, how they palliate their guilt,—of a thousand scarce ten are changed,—inefficiency of the means used to cure them, 315.—disregard the word of God, b 316.

Covetousness, a vice to which old age is peculiarly addicted, b 74.—corrupts the whole soul,—is radically in the understanding, 310.—principally in the will, 311.—virtually in the actions, 312,—produces immoderate desires of riches,—connected with immoderate joy in possessing riches,—anxious fears of losing riches, 311.—heart breaking sorrow in being deprived of them, 312.—difficult to cure, 314.—excludes its

subject from heaven, 317.—how discovered, 318.
Craft, the folly of sinful, c 215.
Craftiness of Cesar and Pompey, b 90.
Creation displays God's power, wisdom and goodness, a 184.—God moved in it, only by free goodness, 185.—the, proves the existence of God, d 3.
Creatures, inferior, moved by instinct, —insensible of moral engagements, 190.—not absolutely impeccable, a 213.—all, obey the will of the creator, b 175.
Crimes, their punishment to satisfy the law, a 353.
Crocodile, the cowardice of it, a 110.
Crœsus, his exclamation when bound at the stake, b 258.
Cross, the, is the appendix of the gospel, b 242.
Cross of Christ, an object of admiration, a 394.
Crucifixion, only inflicted on infamous offenders, a 307.
Crucifixion, described,—of Christ described, 308.
Cruelty of Adam to himself, 200.
Cruel practice of an ancient tyrant improved, b 15.
Curiosity, in divine things impertinent, 370.—dangerous, 371.
Curse removed by the death of Christ, c 257.
Cynics, their impious opinions, a 440.

D

Damnation, the fear of it, insufficient for conversion, c 516.—the punishment of sin, d 56.
Damned, the, will see the glory and know the blessedness of heaven, c 70.
Damon and Pythias, the Sicilian friends, a 311.
Danger of delaying repentance, b 118.—of continuing one day in sin, 128.—of prosperity, a discourse on, b 211.
Darling sins, men should know which are such, b 120.—how to obtain a knowledge of them, 120.—we should pray to God to discover them to us, —diligent watchfulness means to keep us from them, 121.—should be checked in the first thought, 123.—outward temptations to them should be avoided, 124.—speedy repentance necessary, if we fall by them, 128.—fervent and constant prayer against them needful, 129.—prayer against them must be continued, 130.—faith in Christ a sovereign remedy against them, 131.
David, offering himself and family a sacrifice, a 312.—a type of Christ, 540.—uprightness vindicated, b 67.
Day, of judgment will be joyful to the saints, a 544.—why called the great day, c 314.
Dead body, a sad spectacle, d 230.
Death, soul incapable of by any internal causes, a 58.—causes of its entrance into the world, c 241.—causes of the fear of, 244.—gain to a believer, 259.—sure to all, a 103.—fear of, embitters the enjoyment of life, c —awful state of the careless soul at, a 250.—the triumphant one of a christian is honourable to religion, c 85.—why it is continued to the saints, 88.—264.—the spirit with which saints should meet it, 90.—causes of a christian's joy in, 91.—fear of it dishonorable to a christian, 94.—of friends, comfort in, 98.—aversion to, how overcome, d 434.—of saints, its influence, 287.—rules for preparing for it, c 296.—why believers are subject to it, 264.—of Christ depended on several causes, a 144.—the wages of sin, 194.—consummation of miseries to the wicked, 206.—of Christ inestimable, 371.—of Christ available for pardon to those who lived prior to his coming, 380.—of Christ, the virtue of it reaches to all ages preceding and succeeding, 381.—of Christ expiates universally the guilt of all transgressions,—of Christ hath procured grace for men, 382.—of Christ, the redundant merit thereof, 383.—of Christ, a curse to the wicked, a privilege to believers, 389.—of Christ, in it the clearest discovery of the evil of sin, 390.—of Christ, takes off the scandal of the cross, 393.—of Christ, attested by his enemies, 320.—of Christ, Cesar and Alexander afraid of, 431.—of Christ, final remedy of all the saint's miseries, b 31.—of Christ, of a reigning sin is the sweetest savour of life, 114.—of Christ, the desire of, in order to attain at perfect holiness, proof of real piety, 462.
Debt, our, to God, not pecuniary but penal, a 353.
Decius, a persecutor, the rich christians foiled by his persecution, b 246.
Decrees of God irreversible, a 324.—

of God and his law to be distinguished, 142.—of God will be revealed in a future state, c 382.—of God their immutability, d 186.—of God and his revealed will do not clash, d 275.

Defilements, of flesh and spirit, we must be cleansed from b 299.

Defection from duty, what causes it, 393.

Degeneracy of man prodigious, 216.—of the heathens, the cause, 233.

Degradation, of a mere sensual life, 301.

Degrees, of rewards and punishments, d 405.

Deity, splendour of, in Jesus, veiled by his flesh, a 139.—its dazzling rays softened in the humanity, 245.

Delusion, a fundamental one among men, d 255.

Demades, the orator, an anecdote of, a 138.

Dependance upon God our duty, d 26.

Depravation of the will and understanding, a 218.

Depravity of present times lamented, 475.—an innate habit, 210.

Desire, a singular one of a sick person, 227.

Despondency reproved, c 444.

Despair cuts the nerves of our endeavours, b 106.—caution against, to aged and dying sinners, c 294.

Destruction that will hereafter seize on the foolish sinner, b.—of the sinner, fruit of his own choice, 257.—is certain,—heavy according, 258.

Devil, what is his most debasing title, b 300.—the, how he is said to have the power of death, c 340.

Devils may counterfeit miracles, but cannot predict things, a 142.

Diagoras and his servant, an anecdote of, a 77.

Difference between stupidity and patience, d 230.

Difficulties that stood in the way of man's redemption, a 238.—to unravel them, angels at a loss, 239.—of bearing provocations, b 185.—of purging bad passions, 201.

Diligence in the use of appointed means a mark of sincerity, c 426.—of worldly men a reproof to christians, 426.—in the use of, effectual means for obtaining salvation, d 227.

Diogenes and the diseased at the temple of Æsculapius, b 278.

Directions, to attain resignation, b.—first, steadfast faith in God's providence, 181.—second, God to be supreme object of our affections, 188.—third, moderate our valuations of things below, 194.—fourth, a prudent forecast of evils possible to us, 192.—fifth, mournful reflections upon our guilt, 198.—sixth, consider the blessings received, as well as evils endured, 196.—seventh, frequent and fervent prayer, 198.

Discipline of affliction continues but for a short time, 181.

Discouragements in the way of pursuers of holiness, 466.—not to be regarded in matters of eternal moment,—may all be overcome by the love of God, 468.—overcome by heathen instances, 469.

Displeasure of God, holy fear will excite the inquiry how it may be appeased, c 182.

Diseases of the mind and body differ widely, b 129.

Disobedience, human frailty no excuse for it, c 318.

Dispensation, of the gospel, distinguished by abundant effusion of the Spirit, b 492.

Distemper, strange one in the eyes of some persons, 217.

Diversions, carnal, cause men to slight the hand of God, d 85.

Divinity of the christian religion, a 105.

Doctrine, of the christian religion, 105.—heavenly, distinguished from carnal inventions, 253.—of Christ, gives no dispensation to the highest, 502.—a fatal one, of the church of Rome, b 473.

Doctrines of the gospel, prejudice of carnal men against them, d 117.—that are revealed must be received though all difficulties cannot be removed, 156.

Doing good, seize every opportunity of, b 518.

Domestic duties, 519.

Dominion and liberty lost by man's fall, a 204.

Double, the, end to which actions should be directed, b 318.

Doubts, the unreasonableness of atheists, a 155.

Duty of obedience is absolute, d 273.—and reward, connection between, very influential, 274.—encouragement to it in the gospel, a 479.—zealous discharge of it necessary as a preparation for death, c 298.—

endeared to christians by gracious endearments, b 448.
Duties of our several relations, due regard to, promotes holiness, 519.

E

Earth, inequality of its surface most useful, a 10.—man compared to the, 31.
Eclipse not portentous, c 226.—of affliction the time when Christ visits the soul with light, b 161.
Elect, the, in the eye and heart of God from eternity, d 272.
Election separates the people of God from others, c 5.—must be ascribed to the will of God as its sole cause, 419.—of lost sinners designed to glorify the Saviour, d 158.—the fountain of distinguishing grace, 159.—the decree of it, its certain accomplishment, 186.—is from God's free favour, 272.
Elements, their eternity and friendship, a 11.
Eminent saints often most deeply afflicted, b 173.
Employments, lawful, beneficial, 225.—of heaven, c 21.
Endless joy and endless woe encourage to obedience and deter from sin, a 91.
Enemies, victory over them, part of the felicity of heaven, c 30.
Entire obedience due to God, b 222.
Envy, a pollution of the spirit, 345.
Epicurus' doctrine of pleasure of sense, a—a voluptuous swine,—a crafty man. 129.
Equanimity under all conditions, a duty as difficult as excellent, b 454.
Equipoise an, between the rich and the poor, 322.
Esau, his folly and guilt, 254.
Establishing grace should be earnestly prayed for, 506.
Eternal world, veil drawn over it for wise reasons, a 87.
Eternity, its emblem a circle, 100.—of heavenly felicity, c 40.
Eusebius' testimony to the amazing fortitude and patience of the early christians, a 509.
Evangelical mysteries fully to comprehend them impossible, b 369.
Events, train of, in all ages prove a providence, a 26.
Evidence and importance of things, fix our resolution to adhere to them, b 384.
Evils done and suffered by the wicked, their correspondence, a 27.—appear great, seen through grief, b 148.—temporal, consistent with the love of God, d 47.
Examination of our ways promotes holiness, b 508.—of ourselves, its importance, d 317.
Example of Christ absolutely perfect, a 443.—most accommodate to our present state, 444.—his humility,—obedience, 445.—charity, 446.—its excellence and influence, 447.—in the angels, b 477.—in Christ, 474.—of the multitude, its contagious influence, c 451.
Examples, their efficacy above precepts, a 442.—express clearly the nature of our duties,—assure us of the possibility of our duties,—urge to imitation, 443.—of God's forgiving great sinners recorded in scripture, b 39.—of the great not a safe rule to follow, 83.—of Christ lays an obligation on us to follow, 142.—of perfect holiness set before us, 474.—in the scripture, 480.
Excellent privileges of christians above heathens and Jews, a 542.
Execrable idolatry, when Christ came, obtained in the world, a 493.—heathens trained up in,—derived from long succession of progenitors,—pomp of it pleasing to the flesh, 494.
Exhortation to follow after holiness, 463.
Existence of God, 3.
Extremes, two monstrous ones, 102.—two to be avoided by the afflicted, b 145.

F

Face of man, the innumerable different character of, a 18.
Faith consistent with the fear of God, c 184.—in Christ necessary for acceptance with God, 356.—counteracts the influence of temptation, 454.—in Christ mistakes about it, 129.—removes the thick curtain of sensible things, a 96.—requisite to the obtaining of pardon, 124.—is a rational light, wherein it is so,—arises from arguments, that convince the mind of the truth of the gospel,—makes use of reason to consider the doctrines of scripture, 281.—its two acts, b—saving in its nature, 15.—necessary to our obtaining forgiveness, 16.—necessary to forgiveness is of pure grace, 18.—its influence in the mortifica-

tion of our sin, 132.—first principle and foundation of religion,—honourable to God and beneficial to us, 363.—doctrinal,—its nature, 364. objects,—motives, 365.—power and efficacy, 381.—justifying.—in the disposal of things by God's providence, 387.

Fall, God permitted it to raise man to a higher and more stable felicity, 52.

Fallacious reasonings of sinners, 117.

False religions have had martyrs noticed. a 510.

Fancy, the power of it considered, c 447.

Fear, the nature of it considered, 244.—of death, see death,—how threatenings should work on fears of good men, 189.—wrought upon by awful threatenings, a 456.—of man, best corrected by the fear of God, c 182.—due to God, 26.—filial, of God, an ingenuous affection, &c. a—and servile contrasted, 37.—of God distant from the heart of a prosperous sinner, b 221.—of excellent efficacy, to perfect holiness in us, 431.—is the fountain of heroic courage, 435.—and hope, the secret springs of human actions,—their commanding influence. 431.—of God, brief description of it,—preserves and increases religion. 432.—consistent with faith, love, hope and joy,—product of faith, 433.—and love have a mutual causality on each other,—and hope joined in scripture and in the heart of a christian,—and joy are mixed, 434.—of caution, its importance, 435.—should be in exercise in all acts of worship, 436.—its use in times of temptation, 437.—see contents of vol. 3. its consistency with other graces of God, c 183.—slavish exposed, 220.—superstitious exposed. 226.

Felicity of man, its essential and inseparable properties, b 249.

Fidelity, God will crown with highest honour, d 246.

Fierceness of spirit, how pernicious, c 86.

Filial fear caused by the mercy of God, b 2.—love described, d 319.—of what it is productive, 320.

Fleshly lusts steal into the heart by degrees, b 203.—stupify conscience, 363.

Flowers, their kinds, beauty, order and usefulness, a 11.

Flying fishes alluded to, b 151.

Folly, the amazing, of Adam, a 199.—of men to neglect Christ, 276.—in choosing sin rather than affliction, c 57.—of prosperous sinners, b 249.—of present pleasures to eternal,—voluntary, of sinners, 252.—culpable, of sinners, 253.—ignominious, of sinners, 254.

Fool, the sinner's title in scripture, 212.

Forgiveness of sins, b—belongs to God,—is a powerful motive to adoration and obedience,—what is contained in it,—implies sin, sin a law, and how a lawgiver, 1.—abolition of guilt, 4.—God's royal supremacy conspicuous in it, 5.—Son of Man's power to forgive explained, 6.—to bestow it, God gave his Son, 8.—obtained on easy terms, 9.—objection to answered, 10.—all the persons in the Godhead concerned in bestowing it, 18.—abundant in God, 26.—extent of it 27.—entireness of it, 28.—as full as it is free, 29.—a forgiving spirit connected with it, 49.—the doctrine of not to be abused, 32.—abusers of it incapable of mercy, 34.—produces holy fear, 35.—doctrine of, affords strong consolation to the broken hearted, 38.—its various usages urged, 32.—should excite gratitude, 36.

Forgiving injuries enjoined by the gospel, a 415.

Frequent prevalency over temptation proof of growth in grace, b 449.

Friends, many professed, guilty of soul murder, 417.—their death not to overwhelm us with sorrow, d 229.

Friendship of some, like leaf of gold, b 415.—tried in the furnace, 416.—the dearest, has its imperfections, d 437.—Scipio's rule of, b—Laelius' rule of, 418.

Fundamental rule in the christian life, what, 121.

Funeral sermon of Dr. Bates by Rev. J. Howe, d 423.

Future state, the necessity of a, a 72.—some objections to, answered, 78.—what influence, should have on our practice, 93.—even to doubt of it, is a proof of it,—practical inferences easily drawn from, 94.—its honour and glory concealed at present, d 276.—reward of believers described, a—its excellency,

459.—perpetuity, 462.—glory increased as we excel in holiness, b 483.

G

Galen, his challenge, a 1.
Gentile world, conversion of, foretold in scripture. 148.
Gentiles, their deplorable case,—they had no sense of their misery,—desire of mercy, 259 —most polished, called in scripture, α θεοι, 260.
Gifts enhanced by greatness of God the giver, 49.
Gladiators, the bloody spectacles of, in Athens reproved by a wise man, 477.
Glory, the reward of Christ's sufferings, 378 —frequent and serious thoughts of, purify us, b 428.—hope of it should be a constant motive to purity, 431.—of saints will be, solid, inherent, and satisfactory, d 278.—and worldly glory not to be compared, 279.
God, the belief of, a pure emanation of nature, a 40.—resignation to his will in all things due to him,—trust and reliance on, our duty and privilege, 52.—most willing to pardon the humble and contrite, 124.—love to, enforced by the most powerful motives in the gospel, 172.—not to love him base and dangerous, 174.—the harmony of his attributes, in redemption by Christ, 181.—his jurisdiction over man, ground of it, 191.—entered into a covenant with Adam, 192.—his majesty contemned by Adam, 199,—the only being immutably pure and holy,—his permission of the fall, no reflection on his purity, 213.—sin,—providence,—goodness, —can bring good out of evil, 214. —decreed the recovery of man, 235.—his end in contriving man's redemption,—his own glory, 236. —man's happiness, 237.—his glory manifested in works of creation, —in work of redemption,—his attributes gloriously manifested in redemption, 236.—the means he pitched upon to effect redemption, 237.—brings glory to himself out of man's fall, 240.—only can teach the heart, 244.—guilt makes man fearful of his presence, 245.—the Father, not fit that he should be incarnate, 247.—Holy Ghost, 248. —not only lovely, but love itself, —by gift of his Son, assures our hopes of heaven, 254.—in redemption promotes man's holiness, 255. —his discriminating favour, to be owned with gratitude, 261.—his sovereignty, remarks on it, 262.—his Spirit the instructor of man's spirit, 282.—from earth, plants a new colony in the heavenly world, 294.—in fruition of himself, true happiness consists, 256.—to be credited upon his naked word,—incomprehensible to finite minds, 277. —unchangeable in his love, 320.—present in his Son in a peculiar manner, 350.—willeth not the death of a sinner, b 21.—sincere in his declarations of willing salvation of sinners, 22.—ready to forgive sin, 7.—seen in his promises, 19.—threatenings, 20.—ready to forgive, proved from the gracious declarations of his word, 19.—in his slowness to punish,—on hearing the first cry of a sinner, 22.—bestowing repentance and faith, 24—the enjoyment of him the highest glory of heaven, c 43.—the vision of, in heaven, 379.—the knowledge of here imperfect according to our limited capacities, 380.—union of gracious souls with him, 389.—his delight in the saints in heaven, 392.—abundant in forgiveness, b 26.—restores his love to those whom he pardons,—his love to penitents, instances of, 31. —the rock, security and defence of saints, 66.—his excellent greatness incomprehensible, 150.—a thankful recognition of his favour due to him, 218.—gives the impenitent up to their vices, 231.—his love most tender, when to sense, least evidence of it, 269.—his providence special towards his people, 392.—considered in his relative attributes to us, 403.—his goodness seen in the formation of the body, 404.—nature of the soul,—creating us, 405.—our preservation, 406.—the perpetration of his benefits, 407.—its full force in our redemption, 408.—commands us to be perfect, 476.—the more we are like him, the happier we are, 483.—all blessings from him, but some immediately, 488.—a father, in what way, d 298.—the enjoyment of him is the highest glory of heaven, c 43.—his prerogative to his creatures, 4, 54.—

proofs of his existence from works of nature, d 3.—his goodness entitles him to our love, 23.

Godliness, what it is, a—requires that our obedience proceed from love to God, 410.—all our conversation be regulated by his will.—the glory of God be the supreme end of all our actions, 411.

Gods of the heathens authorized advice, 477.—their history infamous, 496.

Good, any, how blessed in value, 222.—the supreme over the same, 221.

Gospel, its promises, nature and suitableness, a 123.—on its first promulgation violently opposed, 151.—grounds of our firm assent to it, 170.—its stupendous success, proof of its divinity, 152.—its main subject, 166.—our great obligation to adorn it, 174,—dignity of its author requires us to adorn it,—as a light, &c. rules of, their perfection and plainness, 175.—preferable to the law, 181.—scheme beyond man's most searching faculties,—no discovery of it in the creation, 257.—its doctrines excel the most noble sciences,—in the greatness of its object, 263.—in the certainty of its principle,—affect the soul with highest admiration, 265.—neglected for meaner things, 264.—knowledge of, produces sincere and lasting pleasure,—infinite variety in, for the inquiry of the most penetrating genius, 265.—doctrines of, immutably true,—exceeds all practical sciences,—in the excellency of its end,—aims at man's supreme happiness, 266.—knowledge of, must be practical,—not a mere narrative, but a promise, 282.—must obtain full possession of the soul,—the opposition, which carnal reason makes against it, 271.—despised by Gentiles, as an ill contrived fable, 272.—its mysteries to be believed, though apparently contradictory,—belief in them on the veracity and power of God,—no doctrine of it repugnant to reason, 279.—its doctrine clearly discovers its divine original, 284.—a better covenant, than that established with man in his creation,—admits repentance and reconciliation, 317.—contains promises of mercy,—provides a remedy for our infirmities, 318.—rejecting the terms of it, brings a condemnation just, certain and heavy, 338.—shows how God can consistently with his justice forgive sin, 396.—exceeds the mosaical institution,—ordains a service pure, spiritual and divine, 420.—furnishes us with remedies against all the evils of this life, 439.—disarms death of its terrors, 440.—requires an entire holiness, 475.—means by which it was first conveyed, 502.—its first heralds destitute of authority and power, 503.—art and eloquence, 504.—not established as other religions in the world, 503.—the great and sudden change it made when first preached proved its mighty energy,—enlightened men's dark minds, 505.—reformed men's hearts and lives, 506.—change effected by it urged by the fathers as a proof of its divinity,—testimony of an enemy in its favour, 507.—suddenness and universality of change it effected, proof of its power,—produced a lasting change in the world, 511.—endures while philosophy declines,—its perpetuity proves its authenticity, 512.—the means of conversion, b 236.—requires sincere endeavours after perfection, 470.—examples of perfection, why, 474.—its sanctity opposite to corrupt nature, d 120.—its various denominations, c 414.—its promised rewards have no effective influence on the carnal mind, d 123.—why men do not obey it, c 321.—the rejection of it is inexcusable guilt and will be aggravated ruin, d 160.—its external ministration ineffective without the influences of the spirit, 138.

Grace in the soul shall finally prevail, a—if not renewed would soon be defaced, 291.—has given assurance, that he will receive returning sinners, 332.—puts a value upon our affections, 336.—punishes with reluctance, 332.—one design of his in redemption to gain our hearts, 334.—in scripture never opposed to Christ's merits but ours, 368.—saving, eclipses creating goodness, b—its riches and freeness wherein exhibited, 8.—and love, a difference of meaning in them,—in what it is exhibited, 7.—seen in angels and men, 8.—common and special spoken of,—special, how it works in man, 25.—special, efficacy of its

operation, 26.—in its radiancy, instances of, 359.—a plant of heaven, tending to perfection, 471.—in prayer, by exercise, is increased,—growth in, promoted by hearing and reading the word, 492.—renewing, its superiority to moral principles, c 417.—how it operates on the soul, 424.—d 140.—secures perseverance, c 445.—distinguishing proceeds from election, d 159.

Graces of the christian, illustrated by by afflictions, b 160.

Gratitude, Seneca's advice how to excite it, a 49.—should be excited by forgiving mercy, b 51.

Grace must give up its spoils at day of judgment, a 389.

Great men have many flatterers and few friends; b 227.

Grecians and *Romans*, impiety of their solemn mysteries, a 109.

Groans unutterable introduction of unspeakable joys, b 44.

Grotius, an excellent observation of his, a 118.

Growth in grace, two general rules of trial, b—certain indication of, in vanquishing of sin, 447.—discovered by frame of the heart, 449, ascertained, by our love to God's holy law, 450.—attachment to his ordinances, 451.—equanimity of mind, &c. 453.—preferring a good conscience to the esteem of men, 458.—desire of death, in order to arrive at perfect holiness, 462.—delightful performance of secret duties, 459.—when the mind is receptive of admonition,—by forgiving injuries, 461.

Guilt makes man fearful of God's presence, a 245.—contracted by those under the mosaical dispensation typical and real, 368.

H

Habits, not acts, mark real character, b—of mind differ greatly from those of body, 84.

Habitual indulged lusts irreconcilable with a state of grace, 103.

Happiest condition in this world, like the moon that always has spots, 251.

Happiness, Aristotle's view of it, a 129.—the Stoics' view of it,—Plato's view of it,—the scripture view of it, 130.—a view of man's in paradise,—in respect to his body,—soul, 187.—the peculiar of the christian, b 189.—of heaven never decays, c 400.—not diminished from number of possessors, 404.—the desire of human nature, 425.—only to be found in God, d 169.

Harmony of the divine attributes, in redemption by Christ, a 181.

Hearing the word should be accompanied by meditation, c 130.

Heart broken and contrite, blessedness of, b 194.—hardness of, quenches the fear of God, c 216.

Heathens, their virtues but glittering vices, a 123.—philosophers compared to wasps,—their darkness and pride, 128.—they drew different pictures of happiness, 129.—their blasphemous accusations against God, 208.—world did not find and own God in the way of nature, 251.—no scripture ground, on which to build a hope of their salvation, 260.—reproached the martyrs, b 244.—taught to bear great injuries, such as condemn many christians, 421,—duties, distinguished by their vices, 474.—their case considered, c 321.

Heaven, its transcendent, peculiar and durable felicities, a 325.—the sanctuary of life and immortality, 328, described, 459.—c 9.—14.—not offered to men upon impossible terms, 71.—glory of it, 372.—a reward and a gift, the harmony of those two notions, 415.—the desire of it should wean us from the world, 429.—reconcile us to affliction, 431.—the certainty of obtaining it, a strong motive to diligence, 472.—sin and affliction excluded from it, d 207.—the lively hope of it, should support under present troubles, 229.—not to be obtained without holiness, 227.—belief of it, should draw forth all our powers for God, 229.

Hell its punishments more dreadful than any present judgments, c 483.—torments chiefly affect the soul, 485.—includes the loss of the most excellent good and the suffering of the most painful evil, 489.—its torments not alleviated by the number of sufferers, 490.—eternal duration of its misery, 493,—74.—its torments more easily conceived by the wicked than the joys of heaven, 501.

Heraclitus, a saying of his, concerning the soul, a 61.

Hereditary vices transmitted by descent, b 71.

Heroism, true, in first christians, not in the ancient heroes, a 162.
Hindrances to religion from the world, d 108.—flesh, 115.—devices of satan, 124.
Hippocrates says, change of season breeds diseases moralized, b 453.
Holiness amiable in itself, a 79.—excellent in God's sight, 193.—what induces to seek after it,—its beauty an inducement to seek it.—its reward,—future and spiritual,—its beauty only seen by the renewed mind, 228.—favourable to knowledge, 282.—of God peculiarly admirable, 403.—provoked by man's sin,—declared in his justice,—honour of it secured in our redemption, 404.—the condition on which our future happiness depends, 405.—duty of pursuing after it, c 103.—eminent, clears up our title to heaven, 104.—promoted by meditation, 135.—what will lead to aspire after a high degree of, 431.—the importance of it in a minister, d 165.—its majestic beauty, 275.—the chief excellency of man, a 469.—the two principal parts of, b 157.—directions how to follow after it,—must be followed in our early age, 463.—zealously, 465.—with alacrity and cheerfulness,—unfainting perseverance, 466.—Christ the meritorious cause of it, 484.—efficient cause of it, 485.—exemplary cause of it, 486.
Holy Spirit, its influences promised in the gospel,—necessity of, in order to regeneration,—perseverance and sanctification, 125.—his office, 248.—its aid offered for our assistance, 478.
Homer censured by Cicero, 110.—how he commended sins to the heathens, 496.
Honour of God's truth as to the legal threatenings preserved in the death of Christ, 528.
Honours of the world, their vanity, c 209.
Hooper the martyr, a saying of his b 273.—answer from, to one who would dissuade him from martyrdom, c 191.
Hope, its influences, a 230.—consistent with the fear of God, c 185.—divine, b—the character of a christian by it, 422.—is natural to the christian in the present state,—congruous, 423.—necessary,—blessed influence under affliction, 424.—distinguished from its counterfeit, 425.—its purifying efficacy, 426.—that a deception, which is unconnected with union to Christ,—a false one, which will end in terrible misery, 430.
Human sacrifices sanctioned by paganism, a 110.—nature, contrary to the gospel in its doctrines and precepts, 519.—body compared to the world, b 70.
Humble fear a necessary duty from man. a 46.
Humbling ourselves, dispassionate and voluntary, b 155.
Humility the richest ornament of the creature, a 281.—its importance and value, 282.—its nature and advantages, 412.—is the mother of meekness, b 193.—a most precious ornament in God's sight, 338.—a virtue not known to philosophers,—hath many excellent promises annexed to it, 339.—a pattern of, set us by Christ, 349.
Hypocrisy, a pollution of the spirit,—who are the subjects of it,—its various characters, 343.—provoking to God, 344.—means to cure it, 345.

I

Idleness, gives satan tempting opportunities, b—opposite to life and felicity, 225.
Idolatry never been universal, a 40.
Idols, the multitude of, a proof of a true God, 40.
Ignorance of future evils a privilege, 54.—universal at the gospel's first promulgation, 493.
Image of God, man made in,—includes a natural similitude,—a moral resemblance,—happiness and dignity, 182.—resplendent, in man's conscience, 186.
Imaginary evils operate as if real, 54.
Imagination and the senses in their operation may be infallibly distinguished, 140.—polluted, an active principle, b 216.
Immutability of God's promise, c 59.—of God a ground of consolation, d 162.
Immortality of the soul, a 57.—of the most noted philosophers, 453.
Impartiality of the sentence at the day of judgment, c 334.
Impenitent sinners, their state desperate, 401.—objects of reigning jus-

tice, b 11.—and rebellious are not pardoned, 15.
Importance of considering this state introductory to another, a 97.
Impotence, there is a twofold, moral and natural,—natural, what it is,—moral, what it is,—of the will lies in its obstinacy, 226.
Impotency in man to all spiritual good, c 298.
Inability of a sinner how it must be understood, c 319.—d 140.
Incarnation could never have been thought of by a created mind, a 258.
Inclination the internal cause of friendship, 82.
Inconsistent professors, their great guilt, 176.
Inconsideration of mind respecting divine chastisements, d 82.
Incorrigible sinners, their fate, a 480.
Indifference to present things makes it easy to part with them at death, c 298.
Infants involved in Adam's sin, proofs a 208.—of believers, how saved, 260.
Inference, a preposterous one concerning departed souls, a 87.
Infidels, objections to a future state answered, 85.—in some respect consistent, 102.—an argument against them, 154.—their difficulty of belief, a mere pretence, 171.—the difficulty of practice, cause of their rejecting the gospel, 172.—live as if all body, b 245.—their folly palpable and penal, 343.
Infidelity causes men to neglect the great salvation, c 456.—hardens the mind against the fear of death, 254.—of Adam, its aggravations, b—an accusation of God, of envy and falsehood, 198.—its causes, a—darkness of the mind, 273 —pride of the understanding,—prejudices arising from sensual lusts, 274.—one of the pollutions of the spirit, b—arguments against it, 341.
Infinite blessedness powerful motive to obedience, a 462.—convincing evidence of, given by Christ,—heathens had only glimmerings and guesses about it, 463.
Infirmity, strange one in the eyes of some, b 325.
Influence of the various circumstances of our lives on our moral habits, 75.—of associates as to moral character, 82.
Ingratitude to God, its baseness, a 31. of Adam, 199.
Innocent person may contract an obligation which will expose him to deserved sufferings, 357.
Inheritance of God's saints, b 442.
Injunctions of Christ extend to the thoughts and motives of the mind, a 407.—contain substantial goodness, 408.
Inquiry, are we proceeding to perfection, b 446.
Insensibility under affliction is a curse, 146.
Instances of the power of grace in changing men, 109.
Instinct in birds, ants, and bees noticed, a 12.
Instincts of animals prove the existence and wisdom of God, d 10.
Instrumental disability to sin, no proof of hatred to sin, b 96.
Intercession, what necessary in order to it, a 243.—of Christ, the manner and efficacy of it, 376.
Invitations of the gospel to sinners are general, d 146.

J

Jacomb, Dr. his funeral sermon, 245.—his character, 285.
Jephthah, the case of his daughter improved, b 165.
Jesus regarded in the dignity of his person,—greatness of his sufferings, 171.—his sufferings undeserved.—obedience, patience and constancy under sufferings,—reward of his sufferings, 172.
Jews, their religion considered, a—of impossible performance to all other nations, 111.—its rituals, 112 —designed to expire, 113.—now but a dead carcass, 114.—from affection to secular things enemies to the gospel, 171.—their extraordinary sufferings described, 146.—sufferings deferred for the elect's sake,—cannot be attributed to any thing but divine vengeance, 147 —prepossessions against Christ, 171.—an argument against their infidelity, 153.—their care in preserving the scriptures, 154.
Job's sufferings described, b 178.—his patience, 361.
John the Evangelist's testimony, as to the truth of christianity, a 156.
Jonah a type of Christ, 540.
Josephus referred to, as to the sufferings of the Jews, 145.

Joseph a type of Christ, a 540.—his unspotted chastity, b 177.—his dangerous temptation, d 33.
Joy not always felt by holy persons, a 79.—of heaven arises from the purity of God, b 401.—consistent with the fear of God, c 188.—of saints in death, 307.—spiritual, its causes, 22.
Jubilee of the gospel preferable to that of the law, a 315.
Judge supreme, two ways of appearing before him, 397.
Judgment day, consummation of all our privileges, 513.—saints' triumphal entry into glory reserved for that day illustrated, 514.
Judgment, of ourselves, how to make it, b 100.—Christ will certainly come in, d 394.—he will come in judgment quickly, 398.—the rewards Christ will then bestow, 401.—wicked will then be banished from God's beatific presence, 405.—what influence the doctrine of future judgment should have, 408. the time of it unknown, c 315.
Judgments, signal on the wicked prove a God, a—instances of, 27.—of God, how they should work upon believers, c 190.—the fear of it restrains the depravity of men, a 73.—heavy ones inflicted when light ones are disregarded, d 91.
Julius Cesar's method of conquering his enemies, b 308.
Jurisdiction of God extends to our understandings, 367.
Justice of God, an infallible argument of a future state, a 74.—the object of holy fear, c 172.—concurs with mercy in the work of redemption, 341.—divine, glorified in the death of Christ, a 352.—of God, what it is, 357.—divine, wherein the strictness of it appears, 392.—of God excludes unholy persons from heaven, c 419.—of God, sufferings of the righteous and prosperity of the wicked consistent with it, d 17.
Justification, effect of Christ's death, a 380.—necessity of our coming to Christ for it, 397.

K

Knowledge possessed in a large measure by Adam,—man's in his original state, 183.—of Jehovah's perfections, 184.—its excellencies, 268.—human and divine, their difference, 265.—natural, ineffectual, 266.—moral, ineffectual,—political, ineffectual, 267.—swells the mind,—should a man obtain all, and die ignorant of Christ he would be a prey to satan, 269.—what are the instruments of obtaining it, b 311.—our duty to increase in it,—increase in, extent and degrees, 355.—must be vital and practical,—of some things, merely speculative, 357.—of God's will, holy fear will search after it, c 180.—human, is not sufficient to make a man wise, 210.—its malignity against truth, 211.—the pleasure of, 390.—d 214.—the imperfection of that pleasure in this world, c 391.—the importance of it in a minister, d 162.

L

Lamp in Roman tombs, an allusion to them, b 271.
Lacedemonian, wise answer of a, a 100.
Law, a rule of living but not a covenant of life, 318.—concerning transplantation of trees, 351.—justifies only the perfect, 397.—binds to obedience, and in neglect of it, to punishment, b 3.—the, is the rule of our duty, prescribed in the gospel, 471.—by which God governs his creatures, c 311.
Laws human, by some said to be sufficient to curb vice, 73.—best that are clearest, 175.—the civil, determines what is a man's property,—of nature, 191.—of God violated with impunity, its consequences, 194.—of Christ exceed the morals of the wisest philosophers, 424.—some, incapable of relaxation,—of God, intent fully answered by relaxing the punishment as to the sinner, by compensation, 345.
Lazarus covered with ulcers blessed with God's smile, b 158.—of Bethany, his resurrection, d 429.
Legal temper in man, a 399.
Levitical ceremonies and ornaments excluded from the gospel, 421.
Liberty, mistake of the carnal mind about it, d 150.
Life of man frail, a 58.—a depositum, 357.—of Christ, a globe of precepts, and model of perfection, b 474.—of a saint, its various conditions fixed from eternity by the counsels of God, 285.—changes of, contrasted with the immutability of eternity, d 189,

Likeness to Christ inferred from our relation to him, b 429.
Lord's day, religious observation of, increases holiness, b 506.—profaners of it, renounce obedience to God and Christ, 507.
Losses of earthly comforts prepare for divine enjoyments, 146.
Lot, his sad choice, 80.—his wife turned into a pillar of salt to season the world with her example, 124.
Love should correspond with love, d 270.—to God enforced in the gospel by the most powerful principles, a 172.—to God, its holy and happy influence, d 21.—of God to man miraculous, a 173.—Christ proved his to us by shedding his blood, 174.—c 277.—we should prove ours to Christ by fruits, a 174.—and obedience to God, in the highest degree due to God, 48.—not the prospect of reward moved Christ to suffer, 287.—the essence of it, in what consists,—of Christ, for our profit, not his own,—and grace, a difference between, 288.—the usual motives of,—excited by a conformity of disposition,—begets love, 289.—to man warmed the heart of God from eternity, 310.—of God in our redemption most powerful persuasion to repentance, 331.—should kindle in us a reciprocal effect, 338.—redeeming, to despise it a high provocation, 338.—of compassion and complacency to be distinguished, 368.—a prevalent affection, stronger than death, 465.—of God that pardons is our sovereign good, b—of God the productive and conservative cause of all good, 52.—of God expels the love of sin, 104,—of God discovered in denying some of our requests, 201.—of God, inspires with true magnanimity, 245.—of pleasure the great temptation to sin, 302.—the leading affection, 396.—has the supremacy among all the graces, 397.—is the brightest part of the divine image in us.—extensive in its influence,—gives value and acceptance to all other gifts, 398.—is the perfection of the law,—the end and perfection of the gospel, 399.—never fails, 400.—in heaven it is pure and refined, 401.—to God, its causes and properties, 402.—to our neighbours, its extent, 413.—of God, consideration of it, like rays of light in a focus, 411.—of God, properties,—of God, must be sincere, 415.—of God, pure, 416.—of God, fervent, 418.—of God wherein it is principally shown, 417.—to Christ, like fire, must have a renewal of soul, 502.—of God general to all mankind, c—special to his people, 40.—to his people unchangeable, 49.—one cause of admission to heaven, 51.—consistent with holy fear, 187.—to God characteristic of the regenerate on earth, 386.—will be complete in heaven, 387.—to saints described, d 70.—a test of christian character, 78.
Lust, its effects, two dreadful instances of, b 304.—one that is indulged will captivate the soul, d 122.
Lusts, love of some, great hinderances to reception of the gospel, a 401.—have their seasons and successively take the throne of the heart, b 72.—our, not invulnerable, 109.
Luxury and lust, rust and foul the mind, 303.

M

Magnanimity, christian, whence it springs, b 255.
Majesty of God the object of holy fear, c 169.
Mahometanism, its falsity, a—character of its author infamous,—its doctrines ridiculous and extravagant, 114.—means by which it rose unjustifiable,—quality of those who first embraced it,—its paradise fit only for swine,—condemned by a Mahometan philosopher, 115.
Malignity of man's mind against God, 333.
Man, his body so formed as to be a fit instrument for the soul, a 17.—considered complexly as joined with society,—innumerable different character in the face of, 18.—the soul of, discovers the Deity, 19.—his guilt in being regardless of God's authority, 49.—compared to the earth, 53.—frailty of his life, 51.—joins the two ranks of beings, intelligible and sensible,—the mysterious name of Horizon given him by the Platonists, 68.—if not immortal, the condition of beasts, better than his, 71.—his proper business to purify the soul, &c. 99.—his highest point of wisdom, 101.—and brutes, the difference between them amplified, 70.—should subject

his understanding to revelation, 167.—misery not his original condition,—an abridgment of the universe,—made in God's image 182.—confirmed to God in holiness in his first state, 183.—admirable structure of his body, 185.—his soul, its excellent endowments, 186. his happiness when first created, 187.—his knowledge of God in paradise,—his love to God in paradise, 188.—his dominion over the creatures,—made for God's glory,—the mouth of all the world to God, 189.—God's propriety in him, the ground of it, 191.—his natural state in paradise mutable,—an invincible perseverance belonged not to him in paradise, 196.—his deplorable degradation through the fall, 204.—his extreme misery by the fall,—creation at war with him as a rebel, 205.—account of his fall solves many difficulties, 209.—not able to restore himself by his natural power,—cannot recover his primitive holiness, 217.—a strong inclination in to happiness,—his degraded state.—loves his bondage, 220.—tries to preserve uniformity in delight,—compared to a bird in the air,—entertains himself with hope, 224.—deceived by hope,—carnal, all his aim to gratify the senses, 225.—a carnal, would not be happy in heaven.—a carnal, deems it impossible to part with his lusts, 229.—a carnal, compared to a person in a dropsy, 230.—chooses not God as his portion till born again.—fallen, cannot recover the favour of God,—not able to satisfy God's justice,—incapable of real repentance, 231.—what renders him incapable of immediate converse with God, 245.—his happiness promoted by redemption, 255.—his condition in the world wretched and unworthy, 298.—unworthy of God's favour, 289.—utterly destitute of moral goodness,—a fixed contrariety in him to nature and will of God—not the least spark of love in him to God,—impotent and obstinate, 290.—his daring rebellion against heaven,—deserves nothing but destruction,—redeemed and not fallen angels, 291.—a captive to sin, 296.—under the tyranny of satan,—under the curse and terror of the law, 297.—deeply in debt,—born a sacrifice to death, 298.—no power over his own life, 357.—deprived of spiritual life, 406.—his obligations to God for creation, preservation, &c. b 405.—drawn into a deep revolture with fallen angels,—wonders of redemption, 408.—in his redemption there was a concurrent love in the divine persons,—his ingratitude in being coldly affected towards the author of his salvation, 410.—unwilling to be holy too soon, 463.—zealous in pursuit of worldly things, negligent of eternal, 465.—the design of his creation, d 464.—connexion between his present actions and future condition, 496.—degraded from his dignity by sin, 50.

Mangibel, burning mountain, sends forth streams of cold water, b 162.

Manna a type of Christ, a 535.

Manton, Dr. his funeral sermon, d 203.—delineation of his character, 231.

Marius' his fear of death, c 254.

Marriage restored to the purity of its first institution by Christ, a 423.

Martyr and persecutor, difference of state in the resurrection, b 244.—Peter, a similitude of his, c 129.

Martyrdom joyfully suffered by the first christians, a 151.

Martyrs their number,—fortitude,—source of their courage, 80.—most heroic of all men, 162.—prized the thorns of Christ's crown, more than the roses of pleasure, b 187.—their different feelings in sufferings, c 441.

Mary, Queen, her funeral sermon, d 178.—preservation in youth from the errors of popery, 191.—her piety, 193—195.

Mature age, its characteristic vices, b 72.

Means by which the gospel was first conveyed prove its omnipotent power, a 502.—requisite for preserving us from darling sins, b 120.—to rise to perfection in holiness,—faith in Christ, 464.—must be used to obtain divine blessings, 299.

Mediator, Jesus Christ a, a 242.—his various offices,—priestly, 243.—prophetical, 244.—kingly, 246.—the office of, incommunicable to christians, 377.

Medicines prepared for us in beautiful fragrant flowers, why, b 475.
Meekness, natural and moral, a 510.
Melchisedec, a type of Christ, 540.
Men their woful folly in refusing heaven, d 226.—exhorted to seek after true felicity, 227.—sensual, ambitious, covetous, 228.—pious, in the lowest station may excel in piety, 248.—the best often in the worst condition, a 76.—the wisest and most penetrating, believers in christianity, 179.—prefer their sins to their Saviour, 388.—some few have died for false religion, 510.—some sanguine, some melancholic, some choleric, others phlegmatic, b 70.—in different climates have their peculiar vices, 71.—as their companions are so are they, 82.—indulging sin, hatred, proof,—compared to a river, 91.
Mercy of God, false apprehensions of, a cause of carnal security, c 64.—the object of holy fear, 172.—is the moving cause of salvation, 409.—divine, the glory of it, d 155.—hopes of ground of sincere resolution to forsake sin, a 233.—magnified in the excellency of the state man is advanced to by Christ, 314.—of God represented with peculiar advantages,—of God the freeness and greatness of it, 285.—of God, its original, 286.—of God, its object, 289.—great in raising mankind more glorious out of the ruins of the fall, 316.—acts in conjunction with other perfections, b 12.—flows from God, as water from a fountain, 22.—the reflection of it gives the clearest discovery of the heart, 36.—divine, proposed as a model for our imitation, 50.—two circumstances that render it glorious and worthy of our thankfulness,—exercised though we long continued in rebellion,—often towards those of greatest guilt, 54.
Merit, proof that the saints have no claim to it, c 54.—human could never obtain heaven, 409.
Meriphus, his shield, moralized, b 285.
Messiah proved by the accomplishment of prophecy, a 142.
Metaphors which represent heaven, c 373
Mind, the, rectifies the false report of the senses, a 60.—the carnal insensible of its misery, 218.
Minister, a holy one fitter to preach the gospel than an angel, b 493.
Ministers, the qualifications of those who are successful, d 162.—motives to excite them to a faithful discharge of their duty, 167.—what they should not be like, 233.—unfaithful their doom, 258.—their disadvantages, 234.—duty as to private admonition, 259.—should be something more than mere orators, 252.—their motives, 256.—should be like aromatic plants, 263.—should boldly enforce all Christ's commands,—should unite zeal with meekness, 261.—loss of them an afflictive providence, 289.—their peculiar temptations, b—some like a winter's sun, 76.—tempted to vent animosities in the pulpit,—tempted to be vainglorious,—respect too much the temporal reward of their office, 77.—should be cautious in dealing with dying sinners, 261.
Ministry, an awakening, useful to excite the fear of God, c 219.
Miracle, a, what it is, a 132, 483.
Miracles, necessary to convince Jews and Gentiles, 483.—of Christ, their quality and number, 485.—wrought to prove the truth of christianity, 132.—those wrought by Jesus reviewed,—of Christ their number and variety, 133.—of Christ, his manner of performing them,—their certainty,—power of, in Christ above that of the prophets, 134.—at Christ's death, 135.—of Christ's resurrection,—objections to them answered,—his enemies forced to acknowledge their truth, 136.—wrought by the apostles, 135.—none equal to the conversion of the soul, 153.—unreasonableness of expecting their continuance, 164.
Misery not man's original condition, 182.—of those who have no joy here nor hope of it hereafter, b 185.—of a sinner owing to himself, c 424.
Mistakes easy as to the strength of grace in men's souls, b 446.
Mithridates, the joy of the Romans at his death, 111.
Moderate use of worldly things necessary in prosperity, b 278.
Moderation in the enjoyment of lawful things produced by the fear of God, c 181.
Moral evidence sufficiently convincing, a 119.—law, its obligations

improved by Christ, 423.—duties fully revealed, only in the gospel, 472.—impotence of men is their guilt, not just excuse, b 107.—impotence of men will be no apology at the day of judgment, 108

Morality lops the branches, but grace strikes at the root of sin, 29.

Morals of christianity pure, a 121.—of heathens impure, 192.—of the heathens and the gospel institution finely contrasted, 455.—of heathen philosophy corrupt, b 472.

Morning a fit time for meditation, c 126.

Mortification of sin attributed to Christ's death, why, b 131.—the masterpiece of it, 103.

Moses a type of Christ, a 540.

Motives the strongest to holiness presented by Christ, 456.

Mutius Scevola, anecdote of, 510.

Mutual love of the saints in heaven, b 402.

Mysteries of the heathen religion frivolous and impious, a 109.

N

Nations, their universal and perpetual consent proves the existence of God, d 15.

Natural man led by sense, fancy and the passions, a 226.—understanding like the funeral lamps of the ancients, 273.—man averse to reproof for sin, 461.

Naturalist, observation of a, b 45.

Nature, one of its unchangeable laws, a—the depravity of our, 209.—corrupt, pregnant with the seeds of all sins, 210.

Nebuchadnezzar, his insolence, b 220.

Nero endeavoured to strangle christianity in the cradle, a 502.—an instance of his cruelty, d—the cruelty of, 233.

Night a fit time for meditation, c 127.

Nile, effects of its overflow, b 235.

Nobility secular and divine, 438.

O

Obedience and love in the highest degree due to God, a 48.—perfect, an example of in Christ, 175.—excited to, by rewards and punishments, 176.—of faith, what, 278.—evangelical, its characteristics, d 320.—sincere, honours God, c 62.—enlivened by meditation, 119.—proceeds from love to God, 274.—connexion between it and comfort, 297.—sincere, will alone be accepted at the day of judgment, 357.—that which springs from love described, d 74.

Objections concerning the soul answered, a 62.—to eternal punishment answered, 88.

Obstinate sorrow compared to a venomous creature, b—inconsistent with resignation, 149.

Offenders, the most guilty, not always here punished, a 76.

Old age, its peculiar vices, b 72.

Omnipotence of God secures the saints from danger, d 28.

Omniscience of God, the object of holy fear, c 170.—will appear against sinners at the day of judgment, 329.

Orpheus and the Sirens, b 282.

P

Pagan judges, their favourable testimony to christians, a.

Pagans have acknowledged a future judgment, 138.

Pain, Stoical doctrine of, mere bravado, 80.

Parable of the prodigal, what it represents, 333.

Paradise might as well be sought for under the icy poles, as in riches, b 319.

Pardon of sin, its consistency with evils inflicted on believers, 30.—the greatest benefit,—nature and quality of it as a benefit, 52.—means whereby it is obtained evince it a great benefit, 53.—gives us a title to and sweetness in all temporal blessings, 55.—allays and mitigates all afflictions of life, 56. produces an excellent disposition to praise God, 57.—joy in experiencing it great, 58.—grace and glory, effects of Christ's sufferings, a 379.—of sin produces joy, c 22.

Partial obedience inconsistent with uprightness, b 99.

Paschal Lamb a type of Christ, a 538.

Passions, their nature and use,—compared to wind, 74.—they differ from each other, 147.—tormenting, the final effects of sin, d 54.

Patience and insensibility widely different, b 145.—advances a christian to high honour, 175.—an eminent instance of it, 177.—often vic-

lent in their assaults, 292.—of God, how wonderful in bearing with a world of sinners, d 59.
Paul his assurance, on what built, a 320.
Peace destroyed by sin, d 51.
Peculiar excellency of the christian religion, a 471.
Pelopidas and Epaminondas, an anecdote of, b 201.
Pennies to obtain pardon, like a crown of straw, a 407.
People of God, this by election, special redemption, regeneration, and voluntary and persevering obedience, c 5.
Perfection spiritual, unfolded and enforced, b 296.—of man in what it principally consists, 249.—of holiness wherein it consists,—of holiness, a threefold,—of holiness, of innocence, 348.—of holiness, of grace,—of holiness, of glory,—essential, 349.—different degrees,—includes conformity in the heart and life to God, 350.—includes constancy, 351.—beautifully illustrated, 353.—relative, 361.—comparative, 355.—moral, 357.—intellectual, 355.—moral, evident by comparison, 357.—absolute, attainable only in heaven, 362.—of the saints in heaven, c 397.
Perfections of God are unchangeable, d 186.
Perfect holiness, motives to strive after it, b 437.—some say striving after it is unnecessary, answered, 470.
Perfect laws given by Christ as the rule of holiness, a 497.
Performance of charitable duties will not purchase indulgence for a beloved lust, b 105.
Perfuming gums of Arabia alluded to, 272.
Persecution for righteousness-sake, comfort under it deduced from a future day of judgment, c 348.—for religion, no objection to the pleasantness of a religious life, 476.
Perseus overcome by the beauty of Andromeda, b 101.
Persians, a barbarous custom of theirs, d 318.
Persons who prosper are under obligations to honour God with their substance, b 282.
Pharisaical spirit of some men, d 121.
Pherecides taught Pythagoras the immortality of the soul, a 98.—an excellent saying of his, 313.
Philip king of Macedonia, anecdote of, b 320.—d 371.
Philosopher shipwrecked in the island of Rhodes, a 4.—an observation of one, c 78.
Philosophers' remark as to the advantage of instruction, a 44.—their vain boast, 55.—basely temporized with popular prejudices,—were unfit to correct and instruct a degenerate world, 110.—their defective views of man, 122.—their false views as to the evils of life, true philosopher's stone, 126.—compared to wasps,—their darkness and pride, 128.—heathen, from pride, enemies to the gospel, 171.—ancient, vain in their imaginations,—some attributed the creation of the world to chance, their absurdity, 251.—of old ignorant of creation, 259.—like Prometheus, steal light from the scriptures,—their morals defective,—ignorant of Christ, 425.—their highest rule to live according to nature imperfect,—their contrary and false notions of God, 426.—arrogated to themselves the praise of their virtues, 428.—contradicted the rights of heaven, 430.—their vain boastings, 435.—their five arguments for comfort under affliction, 436.—their arguments to reconcile men unto death, 439.—their immoral maxims, 440.—vehemently opposed the receiving of the gospel, 496.—pride, their universal disease.—Tertullian reproaches them for want of curiosity as to christian's religion, 497.—they had satisfaction in their own imperfect virtues,—compared to foolish chemists, 498.—true cause why they rejected Christ, 499.—vainly boast what their instruction can do, b 144.—rarely recover man from several lusts, 301.
Philosophy, main design of it, a 126.—never made one believer, 260,—insufficient to direct us in our duty to God, ourselves and others,—delivers unworthy notions of God, 426.—defective as to piety,—platonical, its obscurity,—a servile and pernicious maxim of, 428.—propounds not the glory of God as the end of all our actions,—the design of its precepts, 431.—defective in its directions about moral duties, 433.

—cannot produce true patience and contentment under sufferings, 434.—cannot support in a dying hour, 438.
Philostratus and Apollonius Tyanæus, a 525.
Piety promoted by thinking much of heaven, and approaching death and judgment, b 526.
Plants, some thrive where continually exposed to storms, moralized, 521.
Plato, his view of happiness, a 130.—and Aristotle, their immoral maxims, 440.—restrained his passion when about to strike his servant, b 469.
Platonic philosopher's remark on the loss of Hercules, 178.
Platonists, an observation of theirs, a 68.
Pleasantness of religion, c 474,—proved from scripture and obedience, d 148.
Pleasure and pain, stoical doctrine of, foolish, a 80.
Pleasures, worldly, cannot make happy, 223.—sensual wounding to the conscience, 221.—of the world, unsatisfactory and dangerous to the soul, c 207.
Pleidias, the famous sculptor referred to d 249.
Pliny, quotation from, a 10.—upbraids the Roman luxury, 269.—speaks of the deadly effects of mushrooms, 479.—his testimony in favor of first christians, 507.
Plutarch's observation on Lycurgus' cutting up the vines in Sparta to prevent drunkenness, 434.—his similitude as to the precepts of morality,—compares precepts of morality to strong perfumes, 452.
Polemo reformed by Zenocrates, 451.
Pollution, duty of cleansing ourselves from, c 101.
Pollutions of the Spirit, b 340.—discover the necessity of renovation,—God is dishonoured and displeased by them,—they are easily contracted,—they are most frequently committed, 346.—they are most difficult to cure, 346.
Polygamy and divorce taken away by Christ, a 423,
Popery, its lax morality, c 434.—supported by compulsory measures, d 106.—errors of, 121.
Popilius and Antiochus, anecdote of, a 100.
Popish doctrine of satisfaction, pernicious consequences thereof, 386.
Porphiry's testimony to the purity of Christ's life, 168.
Posidonius visited by Pompey at Rhodes, 437.
Power of God, admirably glorified in creation and redemption of the world, a 480.—of God, in Christ's conception, 482.—of God, in the incarnation of Christ, 481.—in the miracles of Christ, 483.—magnified in making Christ's death victorious, 487.—in Christ's resurrection, 489.—in the conversion of the world to christianity, 492.—shall be magnified in complete salvation of the church at the end of the world, 513.—the object of holy fear, c 170. must change the soul, 417.—the original right of, a 190.—no less than divine could accomplish man's rescue from satan's bondage, 246.—of divine grace to change the most polluted, 305.—the Lord's, the true directory of our desires, c 429.—to do the divine will imparted by the spirit, 276.
Praise and thankfulness due to God for redemption by Christ, a 257.
Prayer should be preceded by meditation c 130.—a powerful means to render the ministry successful, d 166.—a singular one of St. Austin, a 227.—of no avail while sin is indulged, b 105.—of Christ on earth for his disciples, a copy of his intercession above, 133.—its advantages in affliction,—that it may prevail, three rules must be observed,—must be with humble trust on God's mercy,—submission and deference to his will, 198.—for grace that God may be glorified, &c. 201.—blessings only to be obtained by it, 439,—an invaluable privilege, 440.—an effectual means to promote holiness, 487.—what it should be for, 488.—encouraged to earnest, 489.
Preaching the gospel, great end of it, a 399.—the word a principal part of a minister's duty, d 234.
Precepts of christianity given with plainness and authority, a 123,—of the christian religion, 121.—of Christ, their extent, 407.—solidity,—an excellent abridgment of them, 408.—of Christ and Moses compared, 420,—for pardon, its ingredients b—must be humble,—fervent,—daily, 46.
Predestination, the reasons not within our view, a 261.

Predominance of some sins, reasons of it assigned, b 69.
Predominant sin, how it may be discovered, 75.
Prejudices against merit of Christ's death removed, a 383.—carnal, against religion, c 455.—must be removed before sinners will come to Christ, d 148.
Preparation for the day of judgment, c 385.
Present life compared to the sea, b 75.—joy and future glory improved according as we rise to perfection here, 481.
Preserving a man's self from peculiar sins, what it implies, 95.
Presumption quenches the fear of God, c 217.—warning against, 443.
Presumptuous reliance on Christ's merits will not save men in their sins, b 104.
Provision of evils both useful and hurtful, 192.
Pride of Adam, a 198.—the poison of every sin, 250.—tempts man to usurp the honour of Christ, 399.—blasts the mind as with lightning, b 219.—has destroyed two worlds,—in what its nature consists, 324.—moral and spiritual,—includes a conceit of our own excellencies, 325.—ambition a branch of it,—spiritual, its nature, 328.—when men are guilty of it, 330.—observable in the superstitions,—way to mortify it, 331.—provoking to God,—examples of God's wrath against it, 332.—odious in the sight of men,—the parent of contention,—difficulty of its cure,—a sin to which angels and men in their best state were liable, 333.—the radical reigning sin that first lives and last dies, 334.—how to allay the humour of it,—humbled by a knowledge of God and ourselves, 335.—by a sense of our absolute dependance,—inspired by beauty, 336.—riches,—nobility of extraction,—power, 337.—knowledge, 338.—how cured, 340.
Priest under the law, what was his business, a 374.—high, a type of Christ, 375.
Priests, heathen, obstructed reception of the gospel, 501.—Roman pretend a subordinate power to forgive sin, b 6.
Primitive christians, their excellent character, a 473.—excelled those of modern times, 474.—their courage called obstinacy, 500.—thousands suffered horrid torments, 508.
Princes, heathen opposed the gospel, 501.
Principle a common one, acknowledged by all men, 107.
Principles there are three, by which we apprehend things, 276.—of saints and sinners opposite, b 243.
Proculus Julius, his fiction concerning Romulus, a 139.
Profession of religionnot to be deserted from the dread of suffering, c 333.—nor the dread of shame, 334.
Professors inconsistency of some, a 102.—some desert the cause of Christ, why, d 284.
Profit, God teaches us to, by our afflictions, b 204.
Progress in the way to heaven, should be with some zeal as we felt at first, 524.
Progressive steps of sin, 308.
Prohibition in the first covenant, a —declared by God's sovereignty, —was for trial of man's obedience, 194.
Promises of the christian religion,—of the gospel,—worthy of God,—suitable to man, 123.—gospel, of supplies, supports, &c. under troubles of life,—as to supply of temporal wants, 125.—of faith in them, like sacred locks of Samson's hair, 186.—of God's word connected with obedience, b 444.—of God, their holy influence in the christian, 297.—of God, lay the most powerful obligations on christians to be holy, 298.
Proofs of the truth of christian religion of a moral nature, a 118.
Prophecy, its minuteness and accuracy of Christ, 143.—concerning the sufferings of Christ, 144.—destruction of Jews, proof of Christ's Messiahship, 145.—conversion of the Gentile world, 148.—its accomplishment concerning Jews and Pagans, 151.—some special one, concerning the Messiah,—of dying Jacob considered, 530.—an angel to Daniel noticed,—Haggai, 531.
Prosperity and adversity have their peculiar temptations, b 79.—often more destructive than adversity, 80.—the danger of, 211.—what it comprehends, b—abused

as fatal to the foolish sinner, 212.—destructive to the wicked, how, 213.—the incentive of vicious affections, 215.—increases the irascible appetite,—swells men with a vain opinion of themselves,—operates like a concave glass, 217.—foments the lusts of the flesh,—inclines sinners to an impious neglect of God, 218.—exposes to the tempting power of satan, 223.—affords a variety of temptations, 224.—often leads to idleness, 225.—affords advantages to corrupt others, 226.—renders means of grace ineffectual, 227.—makes sinners more incapable of heavenly impressions, 228.—excitations of conscience ineffectual, 231.—tends to suppress the dictates of conscience, 234.—renders external means ineffectual, 236.—one of its peculiar vices is pride. 237.—occasions and confirms infidelity, 238.—renders men averse to suffering for Christ,—tends to enervate the masculine vigour of the mind, 241.—makes men thoughtless of evils that may happen, 242. tempts sinners to delay repentance, 248.—cannot bring true satisfaction to him that enjoys it, 250.—abuse of it provoking to God, illustrated, 262.—not a sign of God's special favour,—is consistent with God's hatred, 264.—often proceeds from God's deepest displeasure, 265.—the evils attending it to be avoided. 270.—and true piety may be united,—piety united, very honourable, 271.—rules how to manage it,—under it we should dwell on our frailty, 272.—be of a meek temper and deportment. 274.—excite affectionate thanksgiving to God, 275.—fear God and carefully avoid sin, 277.—should be connected with a moderate use of worldly things. 278.—in it the favour of God should be most precious, b 279.—should be laid at the footstool of God's throne, 282.—should be with a resolution to part with all possessions and dignities if Christ requires it, 284.—should be attended with earnest and constant prayer to God,—when a testimony of God's favour, 285.

Prosperous sinners dislike a faithful ministry, b 237.

Providence, the serious belief of, tranquillizes the mind, a 418.—the folly of presuming to correct *it*, b 163.—all things so ordered by it, that God will be glorified in the event, 164.—as to promote our good, 165.—divine, its vastness, &c. 182.—its special ends often hid in deep obscurity, 184.—of God not merely the theoretical, 391.—the of judgment will vindicate its proceedings, e 346.

Prudent method of judging things which are difficult, b 376.

Pulpit, not for mere bodily exercise, d 234.

Punishment of vice, a 81.—future, its proportion to guilt, c 325.—consists in part of tormenting passions, 487.—its eternal duration for temporal sins consistent with the justice of God, 494.

Punishments, the difference between those that are castigatory and those that are vindictive, a 387.

Purity of God, the object of holy fear, c 170.—of a christian in what it consists, b 429.

Pyrrhus' advice to his soldiers as to anger, 309.

Pythagoras, how changed from an athlete into a philosopher, a 98.

R

Reason, nothing repugnant to it in revelation, a—in the doctrine of the Trinity,—incarnation of Jesus, 165.—the mysteries of redemption above its reach, 258.—corrupted and right reason, to be distinguished, 280.—the use of it in matters of faith, b 368.—by the fall weakened and its light clouded, 372.—made by some the sovereign rule of faith, 377.

Reasonableness of giving an entire assent to christianity, a 527.

Recompences future, arguments to prove, 81.

Recovery, the means of, why men are careless of them, 219.

Redeemed the, joined indissolubly to the second Adam, 241.

Redeemer, his two principal relations, 239.—his consent to suffer necessary, 346.—willingness to suffer, 347.—was perfectly holy, 348.—impossibility of his being touched by sin, 349.—how if God, can he make satisfaction to himself answered, 360.

Redeeming love, the greatness of it considered,—evils from which it

frees us, 295.—heightened by consideration of the horror of our natural state, 296.—not selfish but disinterested,—greatness of it appears in the means by which our redemption is accomplished,—Christ's incarnation and sufferings, 299.—deserves our highest admiration,—our most humble acknowledgments, 329.—goodness of, exceeds creating, 336.

Redemption, wisdom of God in its contrivance, 235.—difficulties that stood in the way of its accomplishment,, 238.—mysterious, 241.—strange contrarieties in it, 251.—promotes man's holiness, 255.—furnishes strongest motives against sin, 256.—the mystery of, worthy our serious study, 262.—what its foundation, 276.—purchased by the blood royal of heaven, 310.—its perfection and completeness, 467.—admirably glorifies divine power, 481.—special, for the people of God, c 5.

Reformers preached same doctrines as the apostles, a 400.

Regeneration produces obedience to the divine will, c 6.—a description of this gracious change, 416.—effected by divine power, 417.—indispensably necessary, 418.

Rejecters of the gospel their doom, a 339.—sin greater than devils,—strike at Christ's heart, and kick against his bowels,—have a hotter climate in hell than the heathens, 340.

Relation between God and his believing people, b—dignity and happiness of that between God and his people, 438.

Relations domest c, sacred, civil, 519.—the several, in which men stand have their temptations, 79.

Religion, not the invention of men in power to preserve civil state, a 38.—necessary, 105.—man's happiness depends on it,—a variety of in the world, 106.—many false, in the world, 107.—compared with others,—of the heathens, 108.—of the Jews considered, 111.—the christian, more searched into stronger its evidences appear.—its author is Christ, 116.—of Christ proved to be divine by its intrinsic excellencies,—doctrines, 119.—precepts, 120.—promises, 123.—the christian, proved by its harmony, 119.—discovers the corruption and misery of man,—way of salvation, 120.—the christian, sets before us a rule of life pure and plain, 121.—only can do what philosophy attempted, 126.—alone affords solid and everlasting comfort, 127.—promises to reward the obedient, 128.—personal, excites joy, c 22.

Remark an excellent, of St. Austin, 50.

Remedies against all the evils of present life furnished us by the gospel, a 439.

Remembrance of sins at death strikes with consternation, b 115.

Renewed person, every, is a soldier, 448.—state exceeds in happiness man's primitive felicity, a 241.

Repentance a command and privilege of the gospel, 123.—without it no salvation, 124.—what it includes, 232.—what produces it,—not accepted of by first covenant,—not among fallen angels, 233.—and faith necessary to salvation, 384.—enjoined by God, 414.—being required does not eclipse the freeness of grace, b 12.—no merit in it to procure our pardon, 13.—an evangelical grace, 12.—renders the divine mercy honourable in the esteem of those who feel it,—inspires ardent affections and desires in prayer, 13.—most beneficial to man,—and faith like Tamar's twins, 14.—salutary to the soul, 194.—purposes of, a cause of false peace, c 65.—delayed in hope of long life, 282.—arguments against delaying it, 283.—in old age very dubious, 289.—at death, folly and hazard of trusting to it, 290.—the aggravations of sin powerful motives to it, d 64.—mistakes about it, 132.—the hazard of delaying it, 133.

Reprobation, the fatal signature of it, b 269.

Reproof for an unsubmissive temper, 167.

Resemblance to God in heaven will be produced by the vision of him, c 384.

Resignation due to the will of God, a 52.—the great duty of, b 141.—what is considered with it,—consistent with a deprecation of impending judgment, 142.—with a mournful sense of affliction, 143.—what is implied in it,—implies the approval of the understanding, 146.—consent

and subjection of the will,—composure of the affection, 147.—arguments to prove it a great duty,—duty of, proved from God's supreme right over us and ours, 149.—the equity of God in all his ways, 153.—omnipotence of God, 155.—the paternal love of God, 156.—is a lesson we should transcribe in our hearts and lives,—in order to obtain it, look to Jesus, 170.—suffering saint, 173.—is our great honour, 175.—felicity, 179.—a blessed assurance of our election,—testimony of our adoption, 180.—directions how to perform this duty, 181.—promoted by a regard to God's promises, 186.

Resolution sincere, to forsake sin, how built, a 233.

Responsals, ancient how given, 142.

Rest, heavenly, why it is given after a life of service, c 61.—character of those who are excluded from it, 67.—everlasting, to be supremely chosen, 106.—should be the subject of serious meditation, 108.—object of earnest desire, 109.

Resurrection of Christ. c 268.—proves ours, 269.—wonderful miracle, a 136.—great principle on which all our hopes depend, 137.—number and quality of the witnesses of, 138.—proves perfection of his sacrifice, 373.—magnifies God's power,—it was necessary,—quality of his person required it,—nature of his office made it necessary, 489.—foundation of faith in three respects,—proves him to be the Son of God,—the sufferings of his sacrifice, 490.—assures believers of a resurrection, 491.—the saints at the great day,—reasons first considered, 514.—proofs of it,—witnesses such as there can be no suspicion of, a 521.—nature of their testimony renders it credible, 522.—uniformity of their testimony, 523.—would not be deceived, 524.—sealed their testimony with their blood, 525.—proved by miracles of the apostles,—of the saints illustrated, 516.—why it is delayed till the coming of Christ, c 266.

Revelation, causes why men deny it, d 138.

Revolutions in man's condition, b 445.

Reward, the excellency of the believer's, a—where enjoyed, heaven, 325.—under what circumstances,—perpetuity of it, 326.—consists in the vision of God, 327.—to the saints, meaning of the term, c 54.

Rewards of the saints hereafter proportioned to their services, 337.—of Christ's servants, the order and excellency of, d 272.—several degrees thereof, 277.

Rich sometimes survive all their riches, b 273.

Riches have a train of temptations, 80.—cannot afford happiness, c 206.

Riddle, a, unfolded by the gospel, a 158.

Ridicule deters men from a religious profession, d 112.

Righteously, believers are to live, a 409.

Righteousness, the original loss of, what, 203.—of Christ alone absolves from guilt,—imputed to them that believe, 398.—the ground of our acceptance, c 357.

Rigorous penitence without mortification of sin will not prevail, b 105.

Rising of first inclination to sin should be suppressed, 123.

Rituals of Moses, their design, a 159. abolished by Christ, 422.

Rivers, their usefulness, 10.

Road, that good though rugged which leads to a good place, 97.

Rock, the, a type of Christ, b 536.

Roman soldiers, their arms no burden, a 219.—luxury upbraided by Pliny, 269.—emperor, his exclamation diem perdidi, 334.—generals, their triumphal entry into Rome after a victory spiritualized, 514.—physician's advice to assist digestion moralized, b 495.—and Greek literature preferred by some to the scriptures, 496.

Romans, the, their wish concerning Augustus, 71.—one cause of their degeneracy, 73.—and Grecians, the impurity of their solemn mysteries, 109.—their despotic power terrible, 312.—kept in their houses pictures of their progenitors, 443.

Romulus seen to ascend into heaven according to the false testimony of Proculus, 139.

Rules for the discussion of conscience, b 509.

Russel, Lady, Dedication, to, c 233.

S

Sabbath, the rest of it what, it was, c 19.—a well-spent one is a preparation for heaven, 111.—a season for meditation, 127.

Sacrament of the Lord's supper of excellent use to increase grace, b—whence it derives its authority, 498.—increases repentance, 499.—faith, 500.—love, 502.—considerations of it, 504.—in it covenant of the gospel is sealed by the contracting parties, 503.—how the renewing of our covenant may be more effectual, 504.—receiving it should be preceded by meditation, c 137.

Sacred duties, b 522.

Sacrifice of Christ infinitely more meritorious than the levitical, a—averts God's wrath, 364.—makes an expiation for sin,—its blessed results, 366.—objections to it answered, 367.—greatly commands divine clemency, 369.

Sacrifices, legal, of blood, why? 160.—some eucharistical, some expiatory, 361.—their effects declare their nature, 362.—legal, insufficient to expiate sin, 371.

Saint appears perfect by comparison, 357.—his charm for adversity, d—his sorrow moderated, 329.

Saints, the popish congregation of, foolish and impious, a 377.—under the Old Testament had not a clear knowledge of Christ, but enjoyed benefits of his sufferings, 381.—the best have their frailties, 61.—rely upon divine mercy, b 1.—in some cases like rivers that for a time sink under ground, 67.—involved in common calamities, 394.—spiritual in their principles, objects and ends, 450.—their true worth seen by all God's people, 452.—a conspicuous singularity of active or suffering graces in some, 481.—their conjunction and perfection a part of the felicity of heaven c 54.—should die with submission,—with readiness,—with joy, 304.—will be witnesses against the wicked at the day of judgment, 338.—above never lose a ravishing sense of their felicity, d—their blessedness eternal, 225.

Salvation, the plan of, 121.—the meritorious cause of, is the obedience of Christ, c 411.—answer to objection why are not all saved, if God be pleased with the salvation of sinful men, d 156.

Salvian, how he silenced objections against providence, a 216

Samson in the hands of the Philistines, a sad spectacle, b 256.

Sanctification figured by the legal ablutions, a 161.—in order to ours, what Christ has done, 406.

Sanctuary of glory veiled from our eyes, why, d 226.

Satan tempts man to rebellion,—nature of his temptation, a 197.—knows our most vulnerable parts, b—his advantage chiefly from our security, 122.—styled the god of this world, why,—his method of tempting worldly men, 223.—overcomes chiefly by pleasant temptations, 224.—keeps his slaves on a magic circle, 225.—his injunctions perplex many of God's people,—how they may be distinguished, 347.—not laid to our charge, 348.—will accuse sinners at the day of judgment, c 322.—his agency to men's opposition of the gospel, d—enmity to God and the souls of men, 124.—hardens men in unbelief, 125.—suits his temptations to their corruptions, 126.—persuades sinners that strictness in religion is unnecessary, 127.—deceives sinners with false notions of faith and repentance, 129.—suggests to them there will be time enough for repentance hereafter, 133.

Satisfaction to divine justice, man cannot give a—what necessary to, 231.—full, made by Christ's atonement,—removes man's fears, 234.—reasons why we are redeemed by the satisfaction of justice,—different opinions concerning it, 341.—reality of that made by Christ, 344.—completeness of that made by Christ, 370.—requisites in order to it, 344.—in order to make it, Jesus must be willing to suffer, 347.—be perfectly holy, 348.—God and man, 349.—of justice by Christ gives full assurance to man that God will pardon, 395.

Saul of Tarsus met by Christ,—his extraordinary conversion, 157.

Saving grace gives no encouragement to the practice of sin, 469.

Saviour, an all-sufficient one proposed in the gospel, d 146.—his example and love should animate minis-

ters to a faithful discharge of their duty, d 167.
Sceptre of Christ to be submitted to, as well as his sacrifice depended upon, 401.
Scheme of salvation gradually developed and effected, 529.
Sciences, human, built upon uncertain maxims, 265
Scipio, striking instance of his chastity, b 110.
Scripture phrases, how we are to understand them, 368.
Scriptures, should be read daily, 496.—most men careless of the duty of reading them,—should be received in sincerity, 497.
Sea displays hand of God, a 10.—its extent and utility prove the existence and wisdom of God, d 7.
Searching ministry declined by some, why, b 92.
Seasons, their regular succession proves the existence and wisdom of God, d 6.
Secrecy sometimes a temptation to sin, c 350.
Seed of the gardeners, moralized, b 261.
Self-denial enjoined by Christ, a 414.—consistent with the pleasantness of religion, 475.—with respect to moral righteousness, d 120.—favourite sins, 122.—worldly comforts, 123.
Self-examination a preparation for the last judgment, c 360.
Seneca, his advice to make a man grateful, a 49.—contemplating the vast orbs of light, 95.—a prudent observation of his, 166.—for what valued his being in the world, 270.—his precepts and practice at variance, 454.—how he acted in prosperity, b 284.—speaks of a strange infirmity in the eyes of some, 325.—an exile once in Corsica, d 379.
Senses, the, suffer by the excesive vehemence of their objects, a 60.—and imaginations, in their operations may be distinguished, 140.
Sensual men, degrading wish of, in their last hour, 99.—pleasures, love of them natural to man, b 215.—lusts corrupt the judgment, 232.—life degrading and dangerous, 301.—the, difficulty of their recovery, 304.—should address themselves to God in prayer, 306.
Sermons, what should be the matter of, d 252,—the style, 255.
Service of Christ to be performed with zeal,—constancy, 248.—easy, honourable and profitable, 284.
Servitude, the complicated, of a sinner, a 296.
Shame must be connected with confession of sin, b 44.
Shilo, his coming, 530.
Sickness an unfit time for repentance, c 288.
Sin, transient, punished eternally objected to and answered, 88.—the essential evil of, 89.—its deep ingratitude, 90.—defilement cleaves to the soul after death, 93.—its wages, 194.—the dreadful effects of Adam's,—loss of original righteousness, 203.—loss of his felicity, 204.—its horror lessened by familiarity, 219.—compared to a black ground in a picture, 240.—the love of it, causes men to cherish ignorance and reject light and truth, 275.—in every a contempt of God's sovereignty, 342.—contrariety to God's holiness,—for it not to be punished,—the consequences 343.—reasons why God will punish it, 344.—its desert, 355.—what it is, 390.—the fearful punishments that have been inflicted upon it, 391.—must be punished that sinners may be saved, 393.—the act of it transient, but the guilt permanent, b—its not being imputed explained, 4.—to pardon it is God's peculiar prerogative,—God pardons as a father, 5.—arrogance of Roman priests pretending a judicial power to forgive sin, 6.—ministers only a declarative power to forgive it, 7.—to pardon it, a greater act than to create the world, 33.—not so much evil in, as goodness in God, 38.—the least makes us liable to eternal death, 47.—pardon of it deserves our most solemn thankfulness, 52.—that is difficultly retracted is a man's own sin, 85.—what may be denominated a man's own, 68.—that, has the supremacy to which others are subordinate, 86. the darling, engrosses the thoughts, 87.—and that, men desire to conceal and extenuate is their darling sin, 89.—that the enlightened conscience reflects upon has been a darling sin, 92.—found out in a time of affliction, 93.—the predominant affection to it must be mortified, 96.—the preventing plea-

sures of it possess the soul, 448.—good men are delivered from its dominion here, and from its being hereafter, c 16.—flight from, produced by the fear of God, 179.—continuance in, on presumption of pardon very awful, 286.—natural to fallen man, 415.—the most formidable evil, d 35.—is a rebellion against the majesty of God, 36.—vilifies the wisdom of God, 37.—is contrary to the holiness of God, 38.—is the contempt of his goodness, 40.—disparages his justice, 44.—denies his omniscience, 45.—slights his power, 46.—its malignant nature, 48.—native consequences, 49.—penal effects, 52.

Sincerity, what is an evidence of it, b 97.—in what it consists,—it is equivalent to perfection, 98.—opposite to guile, 99.—in religion its value and loveliness, 350.

Sinfulness of impatience under the rod of God, b 168.

Sinner, an unrelenting and unreformed, incapable of pardon, a 234.—in a state of spiritual death, 298.—has no ground of perplexity since Christ died, 396.—an aged one compared to Mount Ætna, b 97.—exhorted earnestly and humbly to ask forgiveness, 40.—compared, to a weak wall, covered with joy, 248. foolish, his end, 256.—is like an ox crowned with garlands to be sacrificed, 304.—an unregenerate one is morally incapable of enjoying the felicity of heaven, c 420.

Sinners compared to marble pillars, b 42.—think God not so severe as represented, 117.—their lives forfeited by sparing the life of their sins,—quiet conscience by promises of future reformation, 118.—have no reason to expect God will receive them into favour on a death bed, 260.—prosperous, to be regarded with pity, not envy, 266.—corrupted by prosperity, recovered by afflictions, 267.—despise heaven, c 427.—their folly in refusing heavenly happiness, 407.—d 214.—lose heaven by their own folly, c 71,—why few converted, d 269.

Sins there are two things in all, which expose the offender to punishment, a 342.—the number of them, forgiveness, b—the quality of them, yet pardoned,—none absolutely small,—some of a most heinous nature, 27.—against the Holy Ghost explained, 28.—reigning, of different kinds in different persons,—their causes either natural or moral, 68.—original, an universal supreme evil, 69.—their different kinds, 93.—some of a repugnant nature, 102.—our, should be renounced, as they cost our Saviour his blood,—to keep us from our sins, the reward of uprightness is a powerful motive, 112.—of relapse more easily prevail, 128,—of all descriptions, and with all their aggravations to be accounted for in the day judgment, c 327.

Sleep, death only such to a saint, d —soul does not at death, 231.

Sobriety, what it is, a 419.

Society, with which we are conversant, its influences, b 82.—in the choice of it prudence necessary, 83.

Socinians deny the sastisfaction of Christ, a 351.—an objection of theirs answered, 537.

Socrates, his death, 84.—advises to comply with the common idolatry, 429.—his remark on reading a book of Heraclitus, 435.—his opinion of death, 439.—obtained the victory over his passions, b 110.

Soliloquy of a soul in glory, a 225.

Solon, his delight in knowledge, c 390. d 214.

Song of the saint in prosperity, 229.

Sons of God, the honour of being such a 317,—all have their frailties, 318. their meanest services accepted, 318,—supernatural assistance conveyed to them, 319.—allowance of sin and omission of good inconsistent with that relation, 476.

Sophocles and his sons, anecdote of, 42.

Sorrow, confession of sin must be mixed with it, b—godly, valuable in the eyes of God, 43.—satisfying to the penitent soul, 44.—heart breaking, prevents relapses into sin, 128.—godly, proceeds from filial love, d 320.

Sorrows, whether arising from sin, compassion or trouble, excluded from heaven, c 26.

Soul of man discovers the Deity, a 19.—immortality of, 57.—not an inseparable perfection of its nature,—arguments natural and moral that God will continue it for

ever,—incapable of suffering from any corruptible principles or separable particles, 58.—its spiritual nature, 59.—receives vigour and perfection from brightness of its object, 60.—a saying of Heraclitus concerning it, 61 —objections concerning it answered, 62.—affected by the temper of the body, 63,—deniers of its immortality, weakness of their arguments, 64.—in its separate state, can both suffer and enjoy, 67.—its immortality, moral arguments for, 69.—looking above the starry heavens, 95.—its immortality should reconcile us to all circumstances, 96.—in all things should have the preeminence above the body,—its immortality taught by Pherecides, its effect on Pythagoras, 97.—to neglect it and pamper the body degrading, 98. —to purify it man's chief business, —too little time devoted to it and too much to the body, 99.—its blessedness in the fruition of God, 101. —unprepared, entering into eternity, 103.—the purity of, lost by man's fall, 203.—till released from terror cannot truly love God, 253. —its tendency to God advantageous, 411.—its diseased state.—healed by Christ, 468.—wronged by sensual gratifications, b 254.—and body of a carnal man, like two malefactors bound together with a chain, 297.—its affairs a daily work, 511.—its highest interests secured by the fear of God, c 198.—its nature, capacity and duration, 205.—polluted by sin, d 49.—its joy on entering paradise, 229.—first attains future glory, then the body, d 227.

Source of guilt embitters life and gives edge to affliction, b 56.—pardoning mercy sweetens troubles, 57.

Speculation, mere, in the gospel unprofitable, a 271.—of divine truths, does not make a man wise, c 212. —will not save the soul, 213.—aggravate its ruin, 214.

Speculative errors, whether innocent or not, b 378.—assent to divine truths not saving, 381.

Spirit partially given under the law, fully under the gospel, a 161.—of holiness plentifully conveyed under the gospel, b 491.—its effects on the moral world, when poured out, a 162.—the Holy, purchased and conveyed by Christ,—necessity of its influences, 448.—given after Christ's glorious exaltation, 449.—great end of his coming, 450.—the inseparable concomitant of evangelical mercy,—its lower operations enjoyed by heathens, 451.—enlightens the mind to see the glory of heavenly things, c 477.—changes the will to choose the supreme good, 479.—his motions cherished by the fear of God, 200.—unites the soul to Christ, 272.—his gracious operations, 273.—of God, how it bears witness with ours, d 318.

Spirits, fallen, full of hatred and envy, a—tempted man to revolt, 196.

Spiritual perfection unfolded, b 284. —gifts all depend upon the influxive presence of God, 325.—blessings we are assured of obtaining from Christ's intercession, 456.

Stilpon the philosopher, his magnanimity of mind, 169.

Stoical doctrine, a philosophical romance, a 80.

Stoics, their view of happiness, 130. —a wise man in their view, what, 268.—the Pharisees in philosophy, 430.—exalted man above God, 431.—wholly renounced the passions,—their virtuous person a mere statue, 433.—their impious opinions, 439.

Storm on the sea of Tiberias represents the afflicted state of christians, b 203.

Story of a dying person, c 175.

Strictness in judging ourselves and candour in judging others proof of great grace, b 456.

Strong fear may lay a restraint, where yet sin is loved, 97.

Strongest lusts may be subdued by grace, 107.

Stubborn impatience under affliction, nearest step to ruin, 168.

Submission to the commands and providences of God our duty, d 29.—of Christ to his father's will, b 142. —a lively example of, 147.

Suffering Saviour to be looked unto in afflictions, b 171.—saints to be looked unto as examples,—they had same frail nature as we, —we have the same blessed Comforter, 173.

Sufferings of Christ calculated to affect our hearts, a 335.—an infinite

good redounds from them, 358.—one cause of admission to heaven, c 53.—meditation on them, 157.—of the worst kind not always infamous, a 499.

Suicide among the Stoics proves their cowardice, 437.—of Cato and Brutus, 438.

Sun, its situation, 5.—motion, 6.—effects, 7,—the, a beautiful resemblance of Providence, b 184.—proves the existence and wisdom of God, d 4.

Superior lasts when vanquished prove growth in grace, b 449.

Supernatural truths cannot be primarily discovered by reason, 369.—objections to them answered, 371.

Supreme love to God due to him, 220.

Surety necessary in order to forgiveness, 16.—in case of a threefold consent necessary.—doctrine of a, explained, 17.

T

Talents to be faithfully improved, c 361.

Talmud, its absurdities, a 114.

Tarantula, the sting of it said to be cured by music, b 101.

Temperaments of men's bodies the secret springs of their inclinations and aversions, 68.

Temple of Solomon, 70,000 men seven years in building it, d 361.

Temptation, to enter into one is extreme folly, b 124.—by entertaining it, we forfeit divine aid,—difference between being exposed and running into one, 125.—serious resolutions against it necessary,—without a permanent principle will not be overcome, 126.—difference between one at a distance and one present, 127.—excluded from heaven, c 18.

Temptations, they are different, but conquered by grace, a—external,—ordered by God's providence, 322.—in courts of judicature, b—of judges, 78.—of ministers, 76.—of prosperity and adversity, 79.—that are pleasant most dangerous, 223.—of prosperity keep men in bondage to satan, 226.—many we cannot avoid, none but we may vanquish by faith, 385.—we are exposed to many, 515.—must be watchful to fly from them, 516.—sensual, a future judgment an antidote to them, c 351.

Terrors restrain, but do not convert, a 458.

Tertullian upbraids the professors of his day, 478.—writes to the christians imprisoned in Africa, b 188.—his observation respecting the fortitude of ancient christians in persecution, c 24.—advice to women of the primitive church, 299.

Testimony of the apostles, as to Christ's resurrection worthy of credit, a 140.—to the truth of the christian religion,—of the Father,—of the Son,—of the Spirit, 156.

Thankfulness in prosperity very becoming, b 275.

Thanksgiving and thanksdoing ought to be joined, 59.

Theodoret, a contemplation of his, 192.

Theodosius, his extraordinary virtue, 49.

Thoughts undissemblingly discover the disposition of the breast,—a man's darling sin discovers them, 87.—distinguished into contriving and contemplative, 88.—are in exercise on the beloved object at all times, and in all places, 89.—of a man an indication of his character, c 146.

Threatenings designed to lead men to seek mercy, b 20.—of God, how they should work upon believers, c 189.

Tiberius and Carnulius, anecdote of, a 48.—dreadful state of his mind, 85.

Tibertius, his noble courage before his persecuting judges, 508.

Time, too much devoted to the body, and too little to the soul,—a just value should be set upon it, 99,—its rapid flight, a 100.—the unfavourable, when gospel first preached, b 501.

Times the quality of those we live in, discover our predominant sin, 83.

Titular christians and specious hypocrites manifested by persecution, 195.

Titus refused a triumphal crown of his victory over the Jews, a 148.

Torquatus Manlius, anecdote of, b 390.

Transformation of body at the resurrection, a 517.

Transgression, the first, its criminality,—many sins combined in that act,—infidelity, 197.—pride, 198.—ingratitude,—contempt of God's ma-

jesty,—amazing folly, 199.—bloody cruelty, 200.
Traveller in the deserts of Arabia, allusion to, 94.—the perplexed, inquires the right way, 106.
Treasures, there are more valuable, than earthly treasures, b 321.
Tree of knowledge, why prohibited, a 195.
Trial, sure, of uprightness, b 65.,
Trinity, objections to the doctrine answered, a 165.—why the second person should become man, 247.—not made known by visible frame of the universe, 258.—the question as to the state of those who deny it, d 377.
Trouble, supported by a view of glory, d 329.
Trust in God our duty and privilege, a 52.
Truth as to speculative sciences comparatively of no importance, 137.—religion of infinite importance, 138.
Truths of revelation cannot be disproved by reason, d 374.—some radical, some primary,—all of equal clearness and moment, 259.—of the gospel must not be adulterated, 260.
Tully, quotation from, all.
Type of Christ, what were types of him, 534.—the manna, 535.—the rock, 536.—brazen serpent, 537.—paschal lamb, wherein, 538.—Joseph; Jonah; Moses; David; Melchisedec, 540.
Types and promises showed God's design before the exhibition of it, 539.—of the law, completed in Christ,—three sorts instituted,—first, things without life,—secondly, things endued with life,—thirdly, reasonable persons, 534.
Tyrants, scourged with a guilty conscience, d 13.

U

Ulysses, how he discovered Achilles, b 122.
Unbelievers obtain not the benefit of Christ's death, a 385.
Understanding and will the two principal faculties of the soul, 58.—its deep depravation, 218.—natural, like the funeral lamps of the ancients, 278.—the, should resign itself to revelation,—some doctrines in the gospel which it could not discover, 275.—which it cannot comprehend, 276.—is not to reject what it cannot comprehend, 279.—human, in our lapsed state defiled, b 374,—enlightened by the Spirit in conversion, d 141.
Unfeigned faith necessary to keep a christian steady in his course, b 243.
Unforgiving spirit, dreadful nature of it, 419
Union of the christian with the Son of God, a 315.—between Father and Son, what results from it, 351.—among christians very important, d —a prayer for it, 235.—among ministers, the advantages of, 165.—with Christ, two means of it, b—effected by the Holy Spirit, 14.—faith, 15.—the source of spiritual blessings, c 272.—with God, the cause of the perfection and the felicity of the saints, 289.
Universal love among men enjoined by the gospel, a 415.—end of our actions should be the eternal enjoyment of God, b 318.
Unregenerate men, their lamentable state, a 96.
Unsubmissive temper argues folly, ingratitude and guilt, b 167.—a disgrace to christianity, 169.
Uprightness, the sure trial of, 65.—instances recorded in scripture, 99.—consistent with frailties but not with chosen lusts, 103.

V

Veil of the temple rent, what it signified, a 375.
Veneration of God produced by his presence, c 385.
Vengeance belongs to God as well as forgiveness, b 33.
Verity of the christian religion, a convincing proof of the, a 518.
Vespasian the emperor reproached himself, on what account, b 73.—the same after, as before he was raised to the throne, 199.
Vice, its punishment, a 81.
Vices disguised under the name of virtues, b 90.
Vicious examples of the rich and noble pernicious, 237.
Victory over a ruling lust makes victory over all others, 111.—no, like that over a man's lusts, 113.
Vileness of man, a sense of it promotes resignation, 152.
Virgil, a quotation from, by Godolphin, a 13.

Virtue, like the sun, covered with its own beams, b 328.
Virtues of the heathens but a dead resemblance, a 123.—all of the same descent and family, 411.
Virtuous, as well as vicious, subject to calamities, 75,—actions, a pleasant complacency in, 79.
Vision, beatific, unsanctified men excluded from it, d 228.

W

Watchfulness against sin, 62.—instance of the happy effects of it, b—want of it, unhappy instances of, 121.—necessary to our advancing in perfection,—the necessity of it, 513.—may be considered either as to preventing evil or doing good,—necessary from satan's subtility, strength, &c. 514.—various snares,—our receptiveness of temptation, 515.—over our hearts necessary,—against small sins, 517.
Ways, many, to hell, 102.
Weak souls made strong by God's grace, 202.
Weakest believer has a full interest in Christ's death, 501.
West Indians, their mistake as to the Spaniards when first invaded by them, 108.
Wicked not afflicted like God's people, why, 159.—spared,—not for want of a discovery of their sins,—power to punish,—not from connivance at sin, 28.—the terror of, in the day of judgment, c 352.—shame when their guilt is discovered, 487.
Wilful ignorance of sinners, b 232.
Will, the, its acts considered, a 65.—of man, what in his state of innocency, 186.—its deep depravation, 219.—renewed by the Spirit in conversion, d 143.
Will of God, that sinners should be saved, proved by his invitations, and the gift of his Son, c 471.—distinction between the decreeing and approving, d 150.
William 3rd, king, address of condolence to, by the dissenting ministers, d 199.
Winds of great benefit, a 9.
Wisdom, the impressions of it visible in every thing, 41.—the highest point of, in man, 101.—divine, in contrivance of redemption, 235.—heavenly, what it is, c 194.—of the world exposed, 202.
Wisdom of God appeared conspicuous in man's redemption, a 235.—in taking occasion from sin to bring more glory to himself,—from man's fall to raise him to higher felicity, 240.—in ordaining such a mediator as Jesus Christ,—in the two natures of Christ, 242.—designation of the person of the mediator, 247.—making the remedy to have a proportion to our ruin, 249.—in the manner in which our redemption is accomplished,—in ordaining contemptible and opposite means to accomplish such glorious effects, 250.—in providing for the comfort and holiness of man, 253.
Wise king, a saying of one concerning the act of government, 183.
Witnesses of the resurrection of Christ their number and quality, a 138.—their report was not built on the testimony of others,—the uniformity of their testimony,—no motives to corrupt them, 139.—their testimony worthy of credit, 140.
Woful effects of indulging our lusts, b 114.—folly of sinners, 256.
Women proud of their beauty, 336.
Word, the, is effectual to increase our holiness, when mixed with faith,—accompanied with earnest desire, b 494.—laid up in the memory, 495.—hearing of it an indispensable duty, 497.
World, considered in its parts, proves the being of a wise God, a 4—not caused by the necessity of nature, 23.—foolish persuasion, that it is in perpetual circulation from infancy to age, 29.—the portion of the wicked,—to come, reserved for saints, 83.—the eternal, a veil drawn over it for wise reasons, 87.—its differences no more after death,—unworthy our esteem, 95.—the heathen, its state when Christ came, 162.—the, most rational way to reform, 246.—created by power, but restored by sufferings, 252.—its state at Christ's advent,—compared to the world at the deluge, 261.—the, convenient to the end for which it was formed, b 213.—cannot give perfection or satisfaction to the soul, 319.—this, cannot give content, c 78.—the folly of pursuing after it supremely, 207.—causes of dissatisfaction in it, 401.—d 223.—the things of, a hinderance to religion, 108.—the pre-

sent and future, comparison between them, 169.
Worldly man, the folly of, a 101.—happiness but a picture, 94—joy, what makes it of little value b 383.—things, their unsatisfying nature and transient duration, c 466.—men, their sentiments at death, c 452.—cares prevent men from attending to eternal things, d 410.
Worship of God should not be conducted with pomp and theatrical ceremonies, b 451.—the fear of God causes a man to perform it rightly, c 180.—society of saints above in, delectable, d 436.

Y

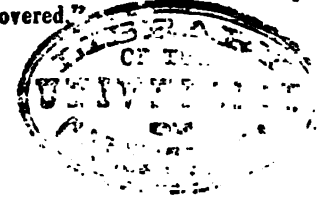
Young persons deterred from a religious profession by ridicule, d 112.
Youth, a kind of natural drunkenness, how, b 72.—importance of attending to religion in, 464.—the time for choosing heaven, c 435.

Z

Zalucus, striking anecdote of, a 260.
Zeal assumed sometimes to quiet conscience, b 95.—necessary to our growth in grace, 524.—in religion commended, c 426.—the importance of it in a minister, d 164.—for God's glory proceeds from filial love, 320.
Zeno and Diogenes, b 122.
Zenocrates reforms Polemo, a 451.
Zeuxes, an anecdote of him, b 78.

POSTCRIPT.

AFTER drawing up the Memoir of Dr. Bates, the Editor met with the following passage in (Vol. I. Page 434.) the addenda of Palmer's Nonconformist Memorial, which a scrupulous regard to Biographical truth, impels him to communicate to the reader. "The account given of Dr. Bates' father, though communicated by two medical gentlemen as the Author of Elenchus motuum nuperorum in Anglia, &c. is found to be a mistake. The ancestry and birth-place of this great man yet remain undiscovered."



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